

## Response ID ANON-DUXZ-42M4-J

Submitted to Northern Australia Insurance Inquiry  
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## About you

What is your name?

Name:

Ray Christien Larcombe [REDACTED]

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? :

We have been at this address for approximately 42 years and when we first took out home and contents insurance, the premiums were quite reasonable. An affordable premium is very important because household insurance is a necessity especially living in Far North Queensland. Each year, especially since approximately 2011 when our premiums began to skyrocket, when we receive our renewal notice we have to re- negotiate with the insurance company to find ways to reduce our premium and to make sure that we are sufficiently covered for any damage to property that we may sustain. Initially we started off with a basic Excess of \$50.00 on both house and contents and we now have a \$5,000.00 Excess on home and \$1,000.00 Excess on Contents.

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)? :

We live in Cairns, Far North Queensland. There are a number of insurance companies to choose from but it all comes down to the coverage you require and also as to whether they choose to insure your property.

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?:

Our home and contents insurance policy with Suncorp Insurance covers us for what we expect it to cover, with storm/ flood insurance being the most significant cover we require. On the whole we are happy with the insurance coverage, it is the cost of the premiums that we are most worried about.

We have made about 3 to 4 home/contents insurance claims in the 42 years we have been insured, the most significant being a burglary of tools and camping equipment from a garden shed, and a claim for when a stolen motor vehicle crashed through our front fence. We have also had a claim for a food spoilage, a motor burn out and a lost gemstone from a dress ring.

We also have motor vehicle insurance with Suncorp Insurance as well.

#### 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?:**

Both insurer's reputation and customer service is most important. You are relying on them to help you in your time of need to get through sometimes difficult situations.

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

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

We know of an instance in our family wherein an insurance company actually rang them to say that they would not re-new their insurance policy when it comes up for renewal.

Our personal experience is answered in Question 6.

#### 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?:**

Approximately 3 years ago we rang RACQ Insurance for a comparative quote for our house and contents insurance. As soon as our address was given, the operator said there was something wrong with their system and they would have to call us back. When the operator eventually rang back, he stated that they were unable to help us and would not entertain any further conversation. Quite rude in fact.

We do have a creek down the end of the street and we are in an 'orange' flood zone. Our street/road has flooded during heavy rainfall combined with a very high tide, but we have never had any water come through the house.

#### 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? :**

Our renewal notice does not say that the price has changed, nor does it say how premiums are calculated. The premiums just go up and up each year.

#### 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 have not heard of the North Queensland Home Insurance website but we certainly will have a look.

Most of the advertising from the insurance companies sounds positive on the ad but not in reality. There are a couple of insurance companies that advertise on tv in our area do not insure in this area e.g. YOUI and Australian Pensioners.

#### 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?:**

We have never used a broker. We are generally happy with our insurance coverage, but not the premium we have to pay.

#### 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?:**

Suncorp provides a 24 hour a day/7days a week phone service which is convenient.

#### 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?:**

N/A

#### 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?:**

Insurance will never be easy to understand, it is all in the interpretation of the Policy wording.

## 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? :**

Refer to our reply for Question 6.

Focus would be on both coverage and price.

## 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?:**

We have met the Cyclone Resilience as stated in the renewal -

Complete roof replacement

Cyclone rated shed

We have taken out a roller door and bricked up the opening in order to give further protection in case of a cyclone

We do have a cyclone kit and use a cyclone checklist

If a cyclone forms in our area, we clear everything from the yard

**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? :**

We have done everything and do everything possible to make our property safe at all times.

We prefer to pay the renewal in full when it is due.

**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?:**

We have over the last few years reduced our level of coverage and also increased our Policy Excess amounts.

As mentioned previously we are happy with the coverage Suncorp Insurance provides, it is just the premium cost.

We feel that in Far North Queensland we are dis-advantaged due to being cyclone prone when in actual fact recent cyclones have gone further down the eastern coast.

## 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.:**

In 2016 when we rang to negotiate the renewal premium Suncorp had us as having marble tops on our kitchen bench tops. ( We wish ).

Some family and friends have been forced out and will be forced out of having house & contents insurance due to the increasingly high premiums.

We are about to retire in the next year or so and if premiums continue to rise we will be in the same situation. If we didn't have insurance and suffered major damage as a result of a disastrous event, we would certainly struggle to get back to where we were before the event.

We would just like to mention that in the Brisbane Floods a few years ago, our sister/sister-in-law's bottom floor level of her dwelling and contents was completely inundated by floodwaters. Everything had to be rebuilt and/or replaced. I had asked her when she received her household renewal policy if it had gone up due to the work carried out. Her response was about \$200.00.

In recent times the Brisbane/South East area has been subject to a lot more storm/flooding damage that we receive in Far North Queensland.

Considering we have never had any damage caused by flooding and/or cyclone to make a claim as such, we feel we are being dis-advantaged living in Far North Queensland.