

brokerwise

Brought to you by: **Council of Queensland Insurance Brokers Inc**

Welcome to brokerwise

Within the pages of this quarterly newsletter we plan to bring you a variety of interesting stories, opinions and news items.

in this issue

Fire one
...bushfire season.

Fire two
...smoke alarms.

Dashboard theft
...is nothing sacred?

Laptop theft
...on the rise.

Under insurance
...roulette without the wheel.

Workplace bullies
...get them out!

'tis the season to be ...ready.

High temperatures + low humidity + wind = BUSHFIRE!

As this issue of Brokerwise goes to press, news media report serious bushfires raging in South Australia, Victoria, ACT and the NSW Blue Mountains.

Thankfully, there are no reports of homes or lives lost but with drought conditions right across the country, it looks like we're in for a bad bushfire season this year.

With all States having experienced catastrophic bushfires over the years, the economic cost to the affected communities and the nation have been astronomical and the loss of human life nothing short of tragic.

In the aftermath of a bushfire the natural environment usually survives fairly well, after all, fires are a natural part of the bush cycle - but property and people that get in the way will not fare so well.

If you live in a fire risk area you need a hazard reduction program to protect your home as a first defence; and sufficient insurance to fund recovery if all your hazard reduction efforts are in vain.


Householders and businesses in high-risk bushfire areas should consider obtaining a quote for the cost of a complete rebuild of their property – and take out insurance cover to suit. High risk bushfire areas are those that are located close to a national park or have had bushfire warnings in the last 5 years.

Underinsurance is still a major problem in Australia with an estimated one-third of households underinsured.

The lifestyle upheaval and economic costs are potentially enormous if a disaster event occurs.

We strongly advise that householders undertake a detailed review of their insurance needs, especially the cost of replacing contents inside and outside of the home. This should

be done by undertaking a room-by-room evaluation and inventory - free 'home and contents' calculation guides are available from our office or on most insurance company websites.

Risk mitigation and appropriate insurance cover are the only defence against disaster and loss so it's very important that householders know and understand what they are and are not covered for under their particular insurance policy. 

“ At this time of year it is good planning to consider your home and contents insurance. An insurance policy forms an integral part of risk mitigation to protect your valuable assets. With the bushfire season upon us now is the time to reassess the value of your home and your contents.”

Kerrie Kelly,
Chief Executive
Insurance Council of Australia



Member:



Smoke alarms – a must have

New legislation makes the installation of smoke alarms mandatory in all Queensland homes and units by 1 July 2007. But the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) isn't waiting for the law to force commonsense. QFRS are calling on all Queenslanders to ensure smoke alarms are not only installed in their homes sooner rather than later but also regularly monitored with frequent battery checks.

The plea came during the recent Fire Awareness Week when fire-fighters emphasised the importance of fire safety for all Queenslanders.

With the theme "Wake Up and Live" as this year's focus, the QFRS campaign encourages residents to take up a number of fire safety precautions to ensure both they and their family remain safe.

During house fires, poisonous smoke and fumes fill the house long before the heat and flames spread. This can actually put people into a deeper sleep rather than waking them and many die without ever waking up.

Every year Queensland fire-fighters are called to domestic fires in which people have lost their lives. With a properly fitted and working smoke alarm, a home

evacuation plan and other basic fire safety measures in place, these deaths can be prevented.

Smoke alarms should be tested and cleaned regularly and the battery changed as needed. Anyone wanting advice on positioning or maintenance of smoke alarms or a review of the options available can get all the answers at the QFRS website. 🐼

www.fire.qld.gov.au



Thieves target high-tech dashboards

What is a car thief to do when getting in is one thing but driving away quite another? Change tack... that's what.

Incidents of car theft, we're told, are down nationally thanks due mainly to the installation of car immobilisers. The quality target now is the theft of whole or part of the car's dashboard!

Unlike the cracked vinyl of the old days, the dashboard of recent model vehicles is a treasure trove of attractive and expensive gadgetry - airbags, GPS satellite navigation, upmarket stereo systems, in-car television and DVD players... to name the juiciest.



Car seats too are a prime target, especially the lumbar supporting, up-down, forward-backward adjustable, fine grain leather variety with TVs built in to the backs, aircraft style.

It's the "everything but the kitchen sink" approach to car theft in which vehicle interiors are stripped to the core - and police say it's a crime on the rise.

AAMI said its motor claims assessors have noticed a spike in internal parts being stolen, especially electronics, as technology gets more expensive, creating a viable after-market.

It seems that the market for the on-selling of these thieved components is thriving with the finger pointing at some unscrupulous vehicle repairers as the main purchasers.

Airbags can cost on average \$2000 to replace while some GPS systems, the thieves favourite, are worth up to \$10000 for a top of the range model.

USA and UK motorists have been victims of this type of crime for some years already and it seems that Australia won't be left behind.

Obviously, the usual 'plan A' advice for motorists to 'not leave attractive possessions within visual sight' doesn't apply in these cases, so lets go to 'plan B' which is, take extra care where you park, lock-up tight... and make sure you are adequately, comprehensively insurance covered. 🐼

Taking the laptop for a walk.

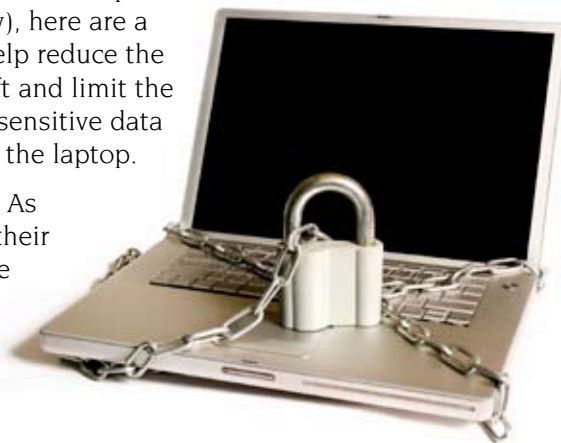
The laptop theft rate in Australia is increasing by well in excess of 50% per year which shows that laptop theft is poised to become the epidemic that mobile telephone theft was only a few years ago.

So what can be done? There is much to be learned from the mobile telephone experience. The telecommunication providers are now working in a collaborative way to combat mobile telephone theft by tracking stolen mobile telephones and blocking their use by thieves.

Although still in its early days, technology is now available that allows for stolen laptop computers to be traced if they are later connected to the internet.

In the meantime, if you're waiting to access this new technology and if yours is one of the *seven out of 10 organisations that had laptop computers stolen during the past 12 months (according to *AusCERT's 2006 Australian Computer Crime & Security Survey), here are a few pointers that can help reduce the incidence of laptop theft and limit the even worse scenario of sensitive data being stolen along with the laptop.

1. Understand the risks. As organisations open up their networks to their mobile work force, to partners, customers and others, they expose themselves to greater



security risks than they encountered when traffic was mostly internal.

2. In the office, use cable locks on laptops as visual deterrents. This won't stop those determined but it will make the opportunistic thief look elsewhere. Most cable locks can be ripped off the plastic exterior of a laptop with a strong tug.

3. Avoid leaving unsecured laptops unattended. Lock them in cupboards, laptop carts or other secure facilities when not in use. If they must be left in a vehicle, they should be covered up or locked in the boot.

4. Keep laptops inconspicuous. Use carrying cases such as backpacks or tote bags instead of tell-tale laptop bags.

5. Always keep laptop data fully backed up, elsewhere naturally, and stop after-theft access to your data with data encryption software.

6. Have a closer look at asset tracking software.

7. Make sure your business insurance protection is adequate cover against hardware and data loss. If in doubt, call our office today.

*Australian Computer Emergency Response Team 🐼

<http://www.auscert.org.au>

Home business - big business

With just over 1 million people operating a business at or from home, Home Based Businesses (HBBs) are an important sector of the Australian business community.

And, just as there is for the thousands of businesses that operate from commercial premises, there are a wide range of Government rules and regulations that apply to HBBs - things like taxation, employment, council approval and licensing. Unfortunately, many HBB proprietors aren't aware of, or simply just ignore, some of the 'rules'.

And so it is with insurance for the HBB. Turning a blind eye to what could be your financial lifeline is the gamble that too many HBB operators take.

If you're a HBB owner, perhaps you should consider these essential business insurances as a priority:

- Public liability cover for persons visiting your business at home (e.g. customers and suppliers) and for any liability incurred while working on your business away from home.

- Workers Compensation for any employees working from your home.
- A combined business insurance package covering the loss of stock, equipment and other contents caused by fire or other perils.
- Professional indemnity insurance if you're in a service industry, especially if you're contracting to government.
- Disability insurance.
- Consequential loss insurance for costs arising from interruption to your business caused by fire and other perils.

One of the most common mistakes made by home-based business operators is to assume that home and contents insurance covers their business risk - in most cases it doesn't.

Got a home based business? Get serious about insurance to the same level that you're serious about your enterprise and improve your chances of a rosy future. 🐼

Bullying at work proves expensive

A recent case of workplace bullying, extensively reported in the media and on legal and HR firm websites, has highlighted the importance of employers ensuring the health, welfare and safety of employees and other persons in the employer's workplace.

A former employee of Group 4 Securities Pty Ltd was recently awarded \$1.9 million in damages for a psychiatric illness caused by workplace bullying. Mr Naidu, a security guard and employee of Group 4, was contracted to provide security services to Nationwide News Ltd. Whilst performing this work, Mr Naidu was directly supervised by Nationwide staff and in particular, Nationwide's security manager, Mr Chaloner.

Mr Naidu was subjected to workplace bullying by Mr Chaloner, which included, among other things, racial abuse, threats of violence, verbal abuse, intimidation, humiliation, excessive hours and excessive workloads.

The Court found that both Group 4 and Nationwide had a duty of care to provide Mr Naidu with a safe workplace and that both companies had breached this duty. As such, both companies were found to be liable for Mr Naidu's illness. The Court held that as Mr Chaloner was an employee of Nationwide, the company bore responsibility for Mr Chaloner's conduct.

The Court held that Group 4 had also breached its contract of employment with Mr Naidu. The Court held that it was an implied term of Mr Naidu's contract of employment with Group 4 that

he not be subjected to workplace bullying in the course of his employment. The Court found that Group 4 had breached this implied term because, amongst other things, Group 4 were aware Mr Chaloner used intimidation toward staff and were aware of the incidents of unacceptable behaviour by him.

As such, Group 4 was aware or should have made inquiries as to whether Mr Naidu's health was at risk in working with Mr Chaloner. Having failed to make this inquiry, Group 4 was responsible for Mr Naidu's illness.

This case demonstrates the importance for business owners and managers to ensure the health, welfare and safety of their firm's employees at work. Organisations need to take a pro-active approach to ensure that they have workplace bullying harassment policies in place; that all workplace participants are aware of their obligations under these policies; and that adherence with the policies is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

This case also demonstrates the importance to business owners of the need for insurance protection against claims of this nature. 🐼



Be sure ...before you insure!...ask your Council of Queensland Insurance Broker about...

COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL INSURANCE

- Business Property
- Business Interruption and Loss of Rent
- Liability, Money, Glass Breakage
- Burglary
- Machinery Breakdown
- Computer
- Goods in Transit
- Contractors Risk
- Motor
- Tax Audit

LIABILITY

- Public Liability
- Products Liability
- Professional Indemnity
- Directors and Officers
- Employment Practices Liability

PRIVATE AND DOMESTIC INSURANCE

- Home and Contents
- Car, Caravan, Boat and Trailer
- Travel

INCOME PROTECTION INSURANCE

- Long Term Disability
- Sickness and Accident

LIFE, SUPERANNUATION, PARTNERSHIP

- Mortgage Protection
- Key Man
- Term Life
- Superannuation



The CQIB represents over 50 Queensland firms employing nearly 400 staff

and placing \$400,000,000 in annual premiums. The CQIB charter is to maintain the level of professionalism of its members by the sharing of knowledge, information and ideas.

For more information visit www.cqib.org.au

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The logo for 'wisewords'. The word 'wise' is in white and 'words' is in blue. A small black cat icon is positioned above the letter 'i' in 'wise'.

The most efficient labour saving device is still money.

Franklin Jones

Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument an exchange of ignorance.

Robert Quillen

Quit worrying about your health. It'll go away.

Robert Orben