

Vero helps Homemaker Centre recover from natural disaster

On 31 December 2019, bushfire ripped through Batemans Bay, on the South Coast of NSW, destroying homes and businesses. In mid-2021, locals celebrated the reopening of the local Homemaker Centre, which was built back stronger to withstand future disasters.

Batemans Bay's Homemaker Centre had been operating for 25 years before it was damaged by bushfire on New Year's Eve, 2019.

The Cranbrook Road retail precinct was severely impacted by the fire and required a complete demolition and rebuild. In partnership with their insurance broker, the Batemans Bay Homemaker Centre lodged an insurance claim with Vero.

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Insurance issued by AAI Limited ABN 48 005 297 807 trading as Vero Insurance.



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Vero approved the claim and appointed commercial building specialist Lanskey Constructions to complete the \$6 million dollar project.

The brief was to rebuild a beloved and much depended-upon community homewares mecca which could withstand future natural disasters.

"The building went through a catastrophe so we wanted to design and construct a building that would survive a natural disaster and minimise any future collateral damage," said Lanskey Constructions project manager Shadi Rustom.

The project saw the employment of almost 300 local suppliers and contractors.

"The building is encapsulated by a non-combustible Colourbond lining, so no external linings on the building will be impacted by any future natural disasters," Mr Rustom explained.

"All entry points are fire doors, and all the building's roller doors and windows are fire-resistant."

Vero Senior Claims Manager Jasmine Hopkins said that understanding the community's needs played a key factor in the design of the rebuild.

"We have seen first-hand the devastating and disruptive impact natural disasters have on people, businesses and communities, which is why we worked closely with insured and key tenants to



ensure their needs were met and that they were supported throughout the process," she said.

The re-built centre is home to six local businesses and includes accessibility features such as ramps, conditional parking spots and a chairlift.

"Retail owners have told me that their customers are really impressed with the rebuild," said Mr Rustom.

"The original structure was built in 1996, so tenants are delighted to have a brand-new building that's compliant with today's standards and built to withstand future disasters."

So far, Betta Home Living, Designer Appliances, Jaycar Electronics, Furniture One, Custom Hire, Eurobodalla Home Improvements and Bay Active PT have moved into the Centre and started operating.

Joint owners of Betta Home Living Dominic McClelland and Geoff Hatton said the feedback from customers and business owners has been positive.

"The owners are very happy with the end result, as well as the support they received from Vero during this tough time. We are looking forward to welcome back our loyal customers to a bigger and brighter Homemaker Centre."

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