

# **Firefighters in race against time with hot, windy weather and NSW bushfire threat predicted to return on Friday**

By Bellinda Kontominas, Tuesday January 7, 2020 - 08:45 EDT

Milder conditions are providing a short reprieve for exhausted firefighters across New South Wales before dangerous bushfire weather is set to return on Friday.

The relief comes as the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) estimated the damage bill from bushfires across the country since September was \$700 million.

There have been 8,985 insurance claims for fire-related damage since then, however that figure is expected to rise significantly.

Overnight rain was a welcome sight across firegrounds, and the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) said it would take advantage of the favourable conditions to strengthen containment lines before the mercury rises back into the 40s in some parts of the state.

Bureau of Meteorology forecaster Dean Sgarbossa said cool temperatures would persist until Friday, when heat would rebuild, initially in South Australia before moving into Victoria and NSW.

Temperatures on the coast are expected to hit the mid-to-high 30s while the mercury will soar into the mid-40s in inland areas including Griffith, Hay and Broken Hill.

Mr Sgarbossa said conditions would be similar to Saturday, when at least 60 properties were destroyed in NSW.

"We'll see strengthening north to north-westerly winds ahead of another quite squally south-westerly cool change," he said.

"There's the chance of high-based and maybe dry thunderstorms, which could ignite new fires via lightning but also produce damaging wind gusts which could lead to erratic fire conditions on the ground."