

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

**Program 1.2**

**Question No. 64**

**Senator Boyce asked the following question at the hearing on 22 February 2011:**

**Senator BOYCE**—Ms Perry just following up on that. For the 2.5 million [emergency alert telephone system] warnings [the number of which is not yet exact because they come in from states and territories as the messages go out from state and territory government] if you are able to give us a break down by state on notice when those figures are finalised.

**Ms Perry**—Yes.

**The answer to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:**

Since it became operational on 1 December 2009, *Emergency Alert* has been used 274 times and issued in excess of 6.38 million messages.<sup>1</sup>

In Queensland, the system has issued more than 5.6 million messages. During the flooding in Queensland between 1 to 14 January 2011, 885,000 *Emergency Alert* messages were issued. Approximately 2.5 million messages were issued by *Emergency Alert* for Cyclone Yasi and the related storm surge.<sup>2</sup>

In Victoria, the system has issued approximately 519,000 messages. During the Victorian floods of January-February 2011, close to 120,000 messages were issued.<sup>3</sup>

Approximate figures for the total number of messages issued by the system in other States and Territories since 1 December 2009 for all hazards are as follows: New South Wales 135,000; Northern Territory 7865; and South Australia 26,000.<sup>4</sup>

Emergency Alert is not used in Western Australia. Western Australia uses its own telephone-based emergency warning system, StateAlert. The Western Australia Fire and Emergency Services Authority advises that between 26 November 2010 and 25 February 2011 StateAlert broadcast 19,108 SMS messages and 10,685 voice messages.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Current as at 8 March 2011, source: Victorian Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner, '*Emergency Alert National Usage Spreadsheet*'.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Director ICT, Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia.