

Opening Statement

Good morning Chair and Senators.

I would like to express our deep regret for the tragic incident on 13 November where a customer's calls to Triple Zero did not connect. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family. We are committed to taking whatever actions are necessary to prevent this from happening again.

This incident happened when the customer's Samsung mobile phone attempted to make an emergency call on our shut down 3G network.

Prior to the closure of the 3G networks across Australia, we worked closely with all manufacturers to identify models of phones not able to make 4G emergency calls.

Based on information received from Samsung in March 2024, we had determined that the particular device used in this incident was able to make emergency calls over our 4G network. We also had evidence from our network call records of other instances of this model successfully making 4G emergency calls.

Only on 5 November 2025, after receiving additional information from Samsung, did we identify this particular device required the customer to accept a software update to be able to make emergency calls.

The customer was notified by text message on 7 November of the urgent need to accept the software update, or the device would be blocked on 10 December. This tragic incident happened around a week later.

We have also provided information to the ACMA in respect of another customer who was reported to us could not call triple zero in September this year. That customer was able to contact emergency services via an alternative option after five minutes.

Yesterday we were told that the call may have been made in connection to someone who has passed away. We have sought to clarify the circumstances but the relevant agency has not verified this.

In the lead up to the 3G shutdown we undertook extensive communications campaigns to alert customers to update their device settings or software, or to purchase new devices so they could still make 4G emergency calls.

Working with the industry, we developed a detailed process to categorise every device on our network, based on its ability to make emergency calls. This process was independently verified and shared with the Department in 2024.

This was a huge task requiring us to classify 28,000 different phone models and variants.

Before 1 November 2024, we blocked 37,000 individual phones identified as needing to be replaced because they could never make a 4G emergency call. We communicated with these customers over many months and offered free and subsidised phones to many of the impacted customers.

We also sent communications to customers with devices that had been provided with software updates to enable 4G emergency calls by the handset manufacturer, but had not yet accepted the update.

We maintained our communications to these customers and in late September 2025, we implemented a change of policy and advised the remaining customers that we would block their phones in October or November unless they accepted the software update. We have blocked around 7,535 of those phones that remained with us and had not updated the software.

We are currently urgently working with device manufacturers regarding information received in October and November on their device capabilities and to understand the implications for our customers.

We have contacted impacted customers. Around 9,000 of these devices can accept a software update. For another 8,000 there is no software update available and these will need to be replaced. These devices will be progressively blocked in coming weeks if no action is taken.

As at today we have blacklisted nearly 13,000 different model types, which means hundreds of thousands of non-compliant phones can never be used on our network.

It is an ongoing process to continue to identify, notify and ultimately block non-compliant devices. This is particularly challenging given many devices were sold in other markets or online and imported into Australia.

We acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and ensuring Australians have reliable access to triple zero. We continue to collaborate with manufacturers and industry to validate device capability.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.