

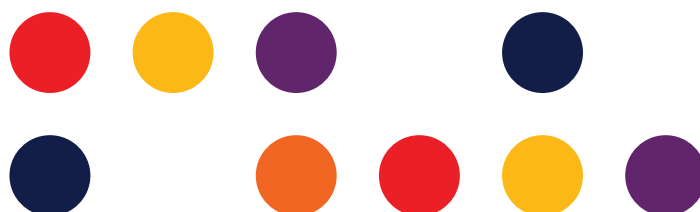


Shutdown of the 3G mobile network

TPG Telecom response to Questions on Notice

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

July 2024



Response to questions on notice

Context for 3G network closure

TPG Telecom welcomes the opportunity to provide the Committee with this response to questions taken on notice during the hearing on 24 July 2024.

TPG Telecom closed its 3G network in January 2024. By the time of network closure, less than 1 per cent of data traffic was being carried on the legacy network.

Our 4G and 5G networks are more efficient at delivering greater speed and capacity, which means better service and experience for customers.

The spectrum used by mobile networks to deliver services to customers is in limited supply and must be used efficiently. Continuing to operate legacy networks takes away spectrum for next generation technologies and degrades the services that the vast majority of Australians using 4G and 5G services are now demanding.

In fact, TPG Telecom's licence to access the spectrum we previously used to deliver services over our 3G network has expired and we no longer have the right to use this spectrum.

Although most of our customers rarely needed to access 3G, we provided 14 months advanced warning as we wanted to make sure customers had the appropriate notice and to offer support to those who needed assistance.

Our staged closure of the 3G network commenced in mid-December 2023 and was completed by the end of January this year.

The 3G network closure resulted in minimal disruption to customers, with very low levels of customer complaints.

Question 1: How many roaming devices are reliant on the 3G network to make or receive roaming calls or emergency calls?

The number of international roaming devices on our network fluctuates from day to day as people arrive and depart Australia.

TPG Telecom has selected 1 – 7 July (inclusive) to provide an estimate of the number of international roamers on our network that may rely on a 3G network to make emergency calls.

Category	No. of devices
3G Only (regional areas using the Optus roaming agreement)	9
4G handset without 000 (VoLTE capable, requires 3G network for emergency calls)	1832
Unknown (devices we are unable to determine their capabilities)	6320

Question 2: In the last 12 months, how many calls to triple zero were placed over the 3G network, and how many daily?

As described during the hearing, there are a number of reasons why an emergency call may be carried by the existing 3G networks. For example, some handsets will automatically attempt to make a call on a 3G network as a design priority feature of the device or will look for the network with the highest signal strength which can be a variable based on the spectrum used by 3G and the device distance from a cell site.

As a result, the number of calls carried on the 3G network to emergency services does not indicate that these calls would necessarily have failed after the closure of the final 3G network.

In the time since TPG Telecom closed its 3G network, the number of emergency calls made by our customers on either the Telstra or Optus 3G networks is:

- Number of emergency calls over 3G network (153,318)
- Average number of emergency calls over 3G per day (~700).

Question 3: How many devices in use now are reliant on the 3G network to make or receive calls or emergency calls? Could you break it down into retail, wholesale and industrial applications.

Update device estimates as at 29 July 2024	Retail	Wholesale (MVNO)
No. of 3G-only handsets	227	5
No. 4G non-VoLTE handsets	7,146	82
No. of 4G handsets without Triple Zero capability	28,624	652
Handsets with unknown capability	14,914	448
Potentially incompatible non-handset devices	1,341	73