

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

Group 3

Program 1.6

Question No. 95

1. How many members of staff have been tasked with monitoring ECP (Emergency Call Person) data and feedback to identify trends in non-genuine calls to 000 as a result of the DisasterWatch phone application?
2. Please provide the evidence obtained seeking to support a reduction in non-genuine 000 calls resulting from the DisasterWatch phone application?
3. Has the Department conducted a feasibility study into a possible upgrade of the DisasterWatch phone application to cater for push messages?
4. What is the total cost of upgrading the system?
5. Is the Department aware of any instances where information made available on the application has not been directly related to a disaster or an emergency?

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

1. It is not possible to identify from ECP data which trends in non-genuine calls are specifically related to the DisasterWatch phone application.
2. The increasing number of users of the DisasterWatch phone application indicates its usefulness in connecting users to authoritative sources of information in emergencies. In reviewing what impact the release of the application has had on the incidence of unnecessary or non-genuine calls to Triple Zero (000), the Department conducted a survey through DisasterWatch and social media to investigate the potential use of the product. In response, 78.7% of users indicated they would not call Triple Zero for information during a disaster or emergency.
3. No. The free DisasterWatch application's primary purpose is to quickly link users with authoritative sources of disaster information. It is not an emergency warning system and does not issue warnings or push alerts.
4. See answer to question 3.
5. As stated on the DisasterWatch application, some feeds may contain non-disaster information. The application contains RSS and Twitter feeds from authoritative sources including hazard agencies. During periods when there are no disasters occurring in a state or territory, some agencies provide information that is not directly related to a disaster or emergency. The application also contains practical safety advice in the form of action guides, which are provided to the community for general information.