



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Triple Zero Custodian—Progress Report— 1 February to 31 July 2026

October 2026

This report outlines the activities of the Triple Zero Custodian (the Custodian) in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the department) from 1 February 2026 to 31 July 2026. It is the Custodian's second progress report. All progress reports are available on the [department's website](#).

The Custodian

The Custodian oversees the Triple Zero ecosystem to ensure it is operating effectively, with all relevant parts connected, aligned and responsive, helping to ensure Australians can receive the assistance they need in an emergency. Information about the Custodian's role, responsibilities and legislative powers is published on the [department's website](#).

Custodian activities (1 February to 31 July 2026)

Reviews and inquiries

Triple Zero Legislative and Regulatory Review

In March 2026, the Custodian published the Terms of Reference for the [Triple Zero Legislative and Regulatory Review](#) (the Review), which implements Recommendation 18 of the Bean Review. The Custodian is leading the review in close consultation with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), the regulator responsible for Triple Zero.

Public consultation opened on 26 May 2026 and closed on 30 June 2026. Submissions have been published on the department's website, and stakeholder engagement continued throughout July 2026. Further engagement is planned from August 2026.

An interim report will be provided to the Minister in September 2026. It will summarise the key issues and themes raised during consultation and outline a work plan to assess reform options and develop recommendations for the final report.

The final report will be provided to the Minister for Communications by the end of March 2027.

Review into the Telstra outage of 8 July 2026

On 8 July 2026, Telstra experienced a software issue which impacted mobile voice and data services nationally, including calls to Triple Zero. The Custodian monitored the incident, observed Emergency Call Person (ECP) partner-bridges, engaged with stakeholders across government and the Triple Zero ecosystem, supported whole-of-government situational awareness, liaised with state and territory police to confirm welfare check outcomes and provided regular updates and advice to the Minister.

The Custodian is conducting a post-incident review of the Telstra outage, which will complement, but remain separate from, regulatory investigations being undertaken by ACMA. The post-incident review will focus on preparedness, coordination, information sharing, escalation, welfare checks, and system resilience. The Custodian is committed to completing a review before the end of 2026, subject to the availability of evidence and engagement with relevant organisations.

Senate inquiry into Triple Zero service outages

The Custodian has continued to engage with the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee Triple Zero Service Outages inquiry, which commenced on 28 October 2025. This includes participation in public hearings on 12 and 26 March, and 17 July 2026.

Network and Triple Zero outage monitoring

During the reporting period, the Custodian monitored telecommunications outages to determine whether they affected, or had the potential to affect, access to Triple Zero. Information gathered through outage notifications and monitoring is supporting situational awareness and building a more consistent evidence base about the performance of the Triple Zero ecosystem. Once 12 months of consistent and reliable data is available, the Custodian intends to begin reflecting relevant performance information in future progress reports, with the approach refined over time as the evidence base develops.

Triple Zero Notification Protocol

The Custodian continued to improve arrangements for receiving early notification of incidents that may affect access to Triple Zero or public safety, including updates to the Triple Zero Notification Protocol. Following feedback from telecommunications providers, the Triple Zero Notification Protocol was updated in February and June 2026 to make reporting clearer and more consistent.

Simulation exercises

The Custodian is committed to regularly testing the Triple Zero ecosystem through simulation exercises to strengthen system-wide resilience and preparedness. This work is being undertaken with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the National Emergency Communications Working Group (NECWG), and the ECP to develop a robust and coordinated testing regime for the ecosystem. The first simulation exercise was conducted in October 2025.

The Custodian's second simulation was conducted as a capability review exercise during the NECWG conference on 13 May 2026. The exercise brought together over 120 stakeholders from across the Triple Zero ecosystem to build a shared, system-wide understanding of the vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities to inform future exercises. Information from the exercise is being used to guide the strategic workplans of the Custodian and the NECWG.

The Custodian is planning a third exercise for the November 2026 NECWG conference. The scope and objectives are being developed in consultation with stakeholders to identify the most valuable risks and capabilities to test.

End to end testing and research

End to end testing

In 2025, the Custodian jointly established the National Telecom Resilience Centre (NTRC) with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to facilitate testing of emergency calling within and across networks to strengthen Australia's Triple Zero systems and infrastructure. The Custodian also chairs the NTRC Governance Board.

During the reporting period, the Custodian continued to support and oversee the first two testing campaigns. The first campaign began on 5 November 2025 and concluded in February 2026. The second campaign ran from early May to 31 July 2026. Approximately 40 devices were tested across a range of network configurations and failure scenarios.

The third campaign is planned to commence in the first week of November 2026 and will focus on identifying device and network behaviours that result in call failures. Mapping these behaviours will help identify potential changes to international emergency calling standards.

Observations and results from the first campaign indicated that emergency calls conducted in normal circumstances were almost always successful. However, emergency calls conducted during deep network failure scenarios encountered difficulties in connecting on approximately 50 per cent of devices tested. System updates by device suppliers in response to the test observations resulted in the success rate improving to 90 per cent of devices tested completing calls.

Improving the resilience of emergency calling

Through the NTRC, the Custodian is also supporting research on international best practice in emergency calling, with a focus on building resilience in emergency calling scenarios. The research program covers network resilience, emergency calling, coverage, outage analysis, performance measures and emerging technologies. This research will inform future testing, standards and policy development.

SMS direct to Triple Zero

The Custodian has commenced proof-of-concept activities with state and territory emergency service organisations and the ECP for Triple Zero, operated by Telstra, to better understand whether SMS-based access to emergency call services could be delivered safely and effectively.

The proof of concept will be conducted in a simulated environment, restricted to authorised participants, and will not involve public access to Triple Zero or affect existing emergency service operations. Findings will inform future consideration of the safety, technical feasibility and operational workability of SMS-based access to Triple Zero across the end-to-end emergency communications pathway.

Engagement and consultation

The Custodian is continuing to engage with stakeholders across the Triple Zero ecosystem, with a focus on expanding effective working arrangements and collaborative communication. Key stakeholders include major telecommunications carriers (such as Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom), the two ECPs (Telstra and the National Relay Service), state and territory Emergency Service Organisations (ESOs), consumer groups, and other government agencies.

The Custodian engages through forums such as the Triple Zero Coordination Committee (TZCC) and NECWG, and regular discussions with individual stakeholders on Triple Zero issues.

TZCC

The Custodian chairs the Triple Zero Coordination Committee (TZCC), which brings together Australian Government, state and territory, emergency service, industry and consumer representatives to support

national coordination across the Triple Zero ecosystem. The TZCC meets biannually, most recently on 6 May 2026.

During the reporting period, the Custodian commenced a review of the TZCC's governance, engagement and decision-making arrangements. This work is intended to strengthen coordination within existing legislative and operational responsibilities, without duplicating or changing the roles of participating organisations.

Welfare check framework consultation

The Custodian is working with telecommunications carriers and ESOs to review and strengthen arrangements for conducting welfare checks following dropped calls to Triple Zero. The first round of consultation on reform options was conducted from 18 March – 10 April 2026. Consultation on a shared industry framework for welfare checks is scheduled to commence in October 2026.

Public awareness activities

On 11 July 2026, the Custodian assumed administration of the Triple Zero website (TripleZero.gov.au) from the Department of Home Affairs and reviewed and updated its content to provide clear and current public information about the Triple Zero service.

The Custodian is working with industry and government partners to improve public awareness of how to access Triple Zero, including options that may be available during telecommunications disruptions. During the reporting period, the Custodian began working with telecommunications providers and industry bodies on a coordinated approach to emergency calling information, which subsequently launched on 24 August 2026. The Custodian's work will continue in the second half of 2026 to support clear, consistent and trusted advice for consumers.

Emergency Call Service Direction and Information Requests

Under the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999*, the Custodian may request that the ACMA issue an Emergency Call Service (ECS) Direction or provide information or advice on emergency call service matters. During the reporting period, the Custodian issued two requests for emergency call performance data, as detailed in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Emergency Call Service Directions and information requests (1 February to 31 July 2026)

Date	Information request
17 April 2026	The Custodian issued a request for ACMA to issue an ECS Direction to each Mobile Network Operator (MNO) to provide 12 months of historical data to the Custodian on emergency call performance metrics. The Directions were issued on 29 April 2026, with information received on 14 May 2026.
1 July 2026	The Custodian issued a request for ACMA to make an ECS Direction to each MNO to provide data to the Custodian on emergency call performance metrics for the period of May and June 2026. The Directions were issued on 15 July 2026.

Data analysis from the above information requests is informing the Custodian's approach to priority workstreams, including welfare check reform, camp-on performance, and network testing.

Emergency Call Service planning and administration

The Custodian regularly engages with the ECP regarding operational and commercial performance. This includes assessing and monitoring upgrades to the ECS. The Custodian is scoping future options for the ECS post-2032, when the current ECS contract ends.

Custodian priorities

On 13 November 2025, the Custodian wrote to ACMA outlining six priorities for late 2025 and 2026.

Table 2 provides an update on progress and next steps. As this work advances, several priority tasks may become routine parts of the Custodian's work program.

Table 2 Progress on Triple Zero Custodian 2025-26 priorities (1 February to 31 July 2026)

Priority	Action to date	Next step
Device Compliance	The Custodian is working with the three MNOs (Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom), equipment suppliers and other relevant stakeholders on improvements to the device compliance regime. The Custodian has also engaged with the ACMA on this priority.	ACMA consulted g on proposed changes to the Telecommunications (Labelling Notice for Customer Equipment and Customer Cabling) Instrument 2025 and the Draft Telecommunications (Mobile Equipment Air Interface) Technical Standard 2026 to enhance device compliance with consultation closing on 17 September 2026. ACMA is considering possible pathways for implementing a device compliance register.
Triple Zero Disruption Notifications	In June 2026, the Custodian provided an updated Triple Zero Notification Protocol and call fail notification form to carriers which reflects feedback the Custodian has received to date, particularly that the form should be simplified.	The Custodian will continue to consider additional feedback provided by carriers to inform further notification improvements.
Transparency of Information held by the Emergency Call Person	In November 2025, the Custodian sought information from carriers, and Telstra in its capacity as the ECP. There is no current requirement on the ECP to provide information to other stakeholders in the Triple Zero ecosystem.	The Custodian will continue to review information provided and engage with subject matter experts to understand the current issues and potential solutions.
Mutual Assistance Arrangements	On 21 January 2026, the three MNOs signed a mutual assistance MoU, which documents a formal process for each party to request, and provide, mutual assistance during critical network failures, such as those due to natural disasters or network outages. It includes processes for how the MNOs can verify the status of emergency camp on calling on each network.	The Custodian will maintain ongoing engagement with industry to assess progress. To support improved information sharing and transparency across carriers, the Custodian may review the effectiveness of the arrangements and provide findings and feedback to MNOs before the first annual review of the MoU.
Network Testing	In November 2025, the Custodian sent information requests to all carriers regarding changes to networks and testing done in advance of and following changes. The Custodian then met with industry representatives in December 2025.	The Custodian has initiated further engagement with MNOs, including presentations on network testing and monitoring practices, policy settings, and audit processes. Following recent outages across Optus, TPG Telecom, and Telstra, this engagement will inform the Custodian's understanding of industry approaches to network assurance and policy implementation.

Priority	Action to date	Next step
Welfare Check Procedures	The Custodian is developing and consulting on a standardised welfare check framework, informed by feedback from MNOs and ESOs. The first consultation round was conducted in April 2026.	The Custodian will conduct a second round of consultation on the draft framework during the second half of 2026. Key areas for consultation will include internal procedures, information retrieval requirements, initiation processes, and other operational considerations.

Next progress report

The next progress report is anticipated to cover the Custodian's activities in the period 1 August 2026 to 31 January 2027 and provide an update on its priorities. As the Custodian's evidence base matures, future reports are expected to increasingly incorporate information about the performance of the Triple Zero ecosystem.