

Monday, 15 June 2026

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

this is my response to the Triple Zero Legislative and Regulatory Review. It is not comprehensive but outlines some of my grave concerns in relation to Triple Zero access in Australia - as well as the actions of the Minister of Communications and regulatory bodies including the ACMA - in recent years.

I have sent no less than 6 detailed e-mails to my Federal Member of Parliament (spanning 2 different members of different parties) complaining about the actions of Michelle Rowland, then Minister of Communications, for her part in concocting the dreadful Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Amendment Determination 2024 (No. 1).

Incredibly - somehow - our government decided to completely ignore all existing precedent, common sense, and any sense of procedural fairness - and suddenly start blocking *working* mobile devices willy-nilly with *only 3 days' notice* - and absolutely no prior warning whatsoever of such a hostile, aggressive, and nonsensical action.

I was only notified that my 4G capable phones would be blocked on Friday 25 October 2024 at 5:41pm by e-mail. On Monday 28 October 2024 all mobile phones in my household were blocked. Unable to communicate with each other over a messenger or any other application.

The tizzy and frenzy of panic to issues accessing Triple Zero and the lashing out with abusive (in both method and timeframe) legislation as a response has been most unprofessional, reckless, and a national embarrassment - not to mention the hurt it has caused innocent members of the Australian public who did nothing wrong in purchasing and relying upon devices purchased abroad.

Let's be real. Let's be grown-up for a second. In my early life there was no instant "help" button upon my person. If there was an emergency I would have relied upon the community - knocked on somebody's door or shop or workplace - and have them dial Triple Zero on my behalf.

Now many of us (but not all, remember that) have mobile phones. It's nice, and convenient, that we have a much easier method of contacting emergency services.

But does that entitle you, or someone else, to grab my phone and have guaranteed access to Triple Zero? If it does then we need a long discussion as a society before you may assume such entitlement.

And who are you to decide the purpose of my mobile phone? Ever since Apple released the iPhone the mobile phone is less of a phone and more of a portable computer. So how dare the

Minister of Communications declare my portable computer inadmissible on the mobile data network - just because it can't make calls! Such arrogance.

How does the Minister of Communications ignore the fact that mobile phones can, actually, make audio calls over the data network in other ways, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)? The level of incompetence at all levels of decision making that led to the Amendment was staggering.

No compensation. No sense. No rationality. No fair timeframe. Just sheer panic and lash out. That's our recent history of Labor's communications ministry.

Stop. Just stop. Let's take a step back. What prompted this frenzy in the first place?

Telecommunications companies were going to shut off 3G phone networks. Well, alright, mountains of e-waste considerations aside - how were they going to implement this? In a well thought-out and open manner?

Oh, no, they forgot how calls to Triple Zero were handled! Whoops! That's a major oversight isn't it! All the professionals and consultants just completely forgot! Well, now, what's the solution? Force 3G back on until the public had been given plenty of time (a few more years) to prepare, right? That's the only rational response given the magnitude of the oversight...

Why were the mobile phone companies given a complete pass on their responsibilities? *Why* were the experts given a complete pass? *Why* were mobile phone owners - who had followed all published advice - buy a device that handled band 28 etc - why were they forced off the networks without notice? Without compensation? So the mobile phone operators could save a ton of money keeping 3G functioning?

If such reckless and ill-formed legislation with no natural justice was needed to save so much money then why weren't the people affected handsomely compensated?

If you want to take land from people you have to compensate them, right? Right?

WHAT I WANT TO SEE GOING FORWARD

Everybody calm down, for starters.

Next, let's handsomely compensate those whose devices were forced off the network without any reasonable notice. Handsomely. That means compensate for time. Compensate for stress. Compensate all the hours spent configuring and programming their now-blocked devices. Compensate for new hardware. Compensate for time writing to MPs and regulatory bodies. *Compensate*, compensate, compensate.

Immediately allow all 4G-capable phones back onto the network irrespective of whether they can make emergency calls or not. You do not know what I use my mobile device for. It is none of your business. How dare you block my device because it can't make calls. I don't care, I don't use it for calls.

WHAT DO WE (AUSTRALIA) WANT

Now we have to think: are we all so insecure we need to carry emergency push buttons at all times? Is that where we are at as a society, now? Should my car have an in-built Triple-Zero push button? Should every lamp post have a Triple-Zero intercom?

Can *somebody* please think what the objective should be - then give us all some time and reasonable notice so we can equip and configure our lives around that objective. Not have to deal with some Minister wildly changing the rules without notice.

Look; I know that since Covid governments have got the idea in their mind they can inconvenience people - sometimes heavily - without any consequence or need to compensate. But I don't like it. As an Australian citizen I'm angry about this prevailing attitude. It's not good enough. Not nearly good enough. There are often much better ways of handling problems.

Peter Payne