

To The Manager,
National Interests Section,
Australian Communications and Media Authority

My name is Joshua and I am submitting these comments as I am one of the people who will be impacted by the 3G shut down. I would like to focus on two points:

1. The objectives and requirements of the direction and;
2. The potential for impact on waste.

To start with the objectives of the direction, it appears to me that the purpose ECS Determination is to ensure people are not left unaware that they do not have access to emergency services when they need them and while I do not disagree with this principle, I find the proposition that a telecommunications service may simply cancel access to a network based on the inability to call emergency services unacceptable. There are a number of scenarios in which a person may not be able to contact emergency services not related to the shutdown of the 3G network, including not having a mobile phone, being outside of a service area, network outages or having a battery go flat. There is no legal requirement for an individual to ensure that they always have a charged phone on their person and be in a service area at all times. If the problem is that a person would be unaware that the phone can not make emergency calls, notifications can be made without removing the service. Some solutions can be; a text message notification that emergency calls are not supported (something that is already part of the Determination), a method of having a permanent "Emergency Calls Unavailable" message displayed could be investigated and a database of incompatible phones could be set up as a reference for the second hand phone market.

This determination could also have unintended impacts on phone brands, such as the Fairphone, which are only sold internationally being unable to be imported and used on Australian networks despite having full 5G compatibility, limiting consumer choice to what the main network owners (Telstra, Optus and Vodafone) make available.

On the matter of waste, e-waste is a significant problem in this country and based on previous incidents and reports of the illegal dumping of Australian e-waste in other countries and the collapse of recycling programs such as Redcycle leave me wondering what the environmental impacts of forcing people to dispose of still working electronics would have. I, personally, do not have much faith that any electrical device that I dispose of at a recycling centre will actually be recycled. E-waste is only going to become an increasing problem in the future with electrification making items such as cars and outdoor power equipment into consumer electronics that the owner will be encouraged to update/replace rather than repair. The recommendation to make functional phones arbitrarily non-functional is an entirely avoidable increase to the waste stream. The phone I use is a 4G phone that uses the 3G network for emergency calls and after almost 10 years still functions perfectly fine. I see no reason why I, or anyone else, should not be able to choose to use a phone, that was bought and paid for and is still functioning, as a device for primarily accessing the internet, using as a portable hot-spot, use to make VoIP calls or regular calls via the 4G network (if calling in 4G is supported), as long as they are made away that they will not have access to emergency services.