

# Navigating The Transition



## Useful Information On The 3G Shutdown

### Why are 3G networks being shut down?

The shutdown of 3G networks across the three main telecommunications providers is necessary as they move towards more advanced technologies like 4G and 5G. These newer networks are designed to support faster internet speeds, better call quality, and more devices at the same time. As technology advances, it's natural for older systems to become outdated and be phased out to make room for improvements. The shift from 3G to 4G and 5G is similar to upgrading from an old, slow computer to a newer, faster one; it allows everyone to enjoy a better, more efficient connectivity experience.

Each telecommunications provider has committed to upgrading tower infrastructure before the 3G network is shut off, to ensure users receive the same or better coverage on the 4G network as noted on provider coverage maps (refer to the provider information below). As with all technology changes, there is some risk to current provided service quality. The below tips have been designed to hopefully avoid or guide you through any challenges that arise.

### What do I need to do?

If you're affected by the 3G shutdown, the most important thing is to stay informed and prepare for the transition. This means:

#### 1. Checking your devices and plans.

- Follow the steps from your provider.
- If you have a phone manufactured prior to 2019 (more than four years old) you should:
  - check your device manual,
  - visit your device manufacturer's website,
  - contact the retailer that sold the handset,
  - or visit one of your provider's stores for assistance.

As a general guide, your device manual or manufacturer should be able to tell you whether your specific device supports VoLTE Emergency Calling.

For Telstra customers, there is a very simple tool to let you know if your phone is compatible. Simply text the number 3 to 3498, and you will receive a message advising of your phone's compatibility and any actions you might need to take.

#### 2. Considering upgrades if necessary.

- a. Do a stocktake of all your mobile phone and broadband devices and check they are compatible firstly with 4G VoLTE (Voice over Long-term evolution), and secondly within the frequencies commonly used. Further information can be found on the Regional Tech Hub [website](#). Your service provider will be able to help check this.
- b. If your device is not 4G or 5G capable:
  - i. Talk to the supplier of your device (mobile etc) to discuss solutions - you will need to know:
  - ii. The number and type of devices you need to replace. You are responsible for the costs of any devices upgraded/purchased.
  - iii. Your requirements for connectivity going forward? For example, do you need to maintain connectivity in an emergency? Are you running a business and need to ensure you can maintain EFTPOS systems, remote operations or a large device network?

#### 3. Work with the support team from your provider, or your equipment supplier, to identify a suitable timeline to transition all your devices across to the 4G and 5G networks. You may need to only upgrade your device or change a switch on it in some cases or purchase a new device outright in others.



#### 4. Reaching out to your service provider for advice.

- a. Changes will be rolled out on different schedules according to each telecommunications provider. If your mobile service is through a provider that is not directly Telstra, Optus or Vodafone, and you're not sure which network they use, we suggest contacting them to see if you need to make any changes to your devices. Each company or Telco is aware of which of their customers are currently using 3G frequencies in a 4G or 5G-enabled area. This may include using some farm machinery, older mobile phones, and some point-of-sale devices. They will usually contact those customers prior to any changes. However, it is better to be proactive and get in touch early.

Carriers using Telstra network	Carriers using Optus network
ALDI Mobile	Amaysim
Belong	Aussie Broadband
Boost Mobile	Catch Connect
Exetel	Circles.Life
Lycamobile	Coles Mobile
MATE	Dodo
More	iPrimus
numobile	Moose Mobile
Superloop	Southern Phone
Tangerine	SpinTel
Woolworths Mobile	Yomojo

Remember, this change is a step towards a more connected and faster digital world. By taking the right steps now, you can ensure that you stay connected and make the most of the new technologies available.

### Key shutdown dates

**TELSTRA**  
June 2024

**OPTUS**  
September 2024

**VODAFONE**  
Late 2023 (already occurred)

### When should I start checking devices and contacting my provider?

You need to start this process now if you haven't already. These changes are happening across Australia. Many people are going to be contacting their providers for advice and information, which means phone lines and instant messaging services are going to be busy. Don't leave it until the last minute to get in touch – be proactive and get organised now.

#### There are a few things you can do to ensure a successful changeover and discussion with your provider:

1. Have all your device information easily available and accessible to where you are making the call from – if devices aren't moveable, write key information like make and model down and keep it in front of you.
2. Check out the Regional Tech Hub resource on **how to talk to your RSP**.
3. Choose a time to make the call when you are likely to have more time and capacity to have the conversation without getting short on time. If you can, make the call or message on a transportable device, so you can complete other tasks while on hold etc, and relocate back to where you have all your information when your call or message is answered.

### Q&A on 3G Shutdown: Tips and Tricks

**Q1: Why shouldn't I rely on the bars on my phone to determine service availability?**

A1: The bars on your phone represent signal strength, not necessarily the availability of service or network quality. Every device uses and displays signal bars differently, and fewer bars don't necessarily indicate less service. For example, two bars of 5G might be better than four bars of 3G. To determine your service quality, review your ability to use data, make calls, and maintain connections instead.

**Q2: Is there a preference for phone connections over data in network systems?**

A2: Yes, most broadband systems prioritise voice calls over data to ensure connectivity for emergency calls and maintain reliable communication. If you're having trouble with data connectivity, try making a voice call as an alternative way to check network availability.

**Q3: Will I be notified about the 3G shutdown?**

A3: Keep an eye out for communications from your telecommunication and service providers. They are aware of who is using the 3G network and are likely to reach out with information on upgrades, new plans, and tips for transitioning to newer technology.

**Q4: What should I do if my device is 4G and 5G compatible but set to 3G?**

A4: Check your device settings to ensure it's not locked to 3G only. Even if your phone is compatible with 4G and 5G networks, having it set to 3G only will prevent it from accessing faster, more reliable networks. This is particularly the case when some regional users switched to 3G-only for more reliable coverage, and some cel-fi installations came with the advice to use 3G only settings. Visit the Regional Tech Hub [website](#) for an example of how to do this for Telstra GO Repeaters. While you might not have the same device, the settings may be similar on your device.

**Q5: How can I improve my mobile network coverage?**

A5: Even after the 3G shutdown, if you're experiencing weak signal strength, consider using antennas or cel-fi systems to boost your coverage. These solutions range from affordable to expensive, but with some research or professional advice, you can find an option that suits your needs and budget. Telco providers have guaranteed 4G equivalence, but it is possible if you were previously on the fringe of 3G coverage, the changes may result in you not having coverage, as 3G and 4G coverage areas do vary in some places. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing if this is the case until the 3G networks have been switched off. If you think due to past connectivity issues this may happen to you, have a contingency plan and ensure you have a back up option for connectivity. If you're not sure what your options are, contact the Regional Tech Hub for a free and independent connectivity report. You can also continue to check coverage maps on the [Telstra](#), [Optus](#) and [Vodafone](#) websites, as coverage will change as upgrades occur.

**Q6: How many devices in my home could be affected by the 3G shutdown?**

A6: On average, homes have 22-24 connected devices, including not-so-obvious ones like health monitors, on-farm devices, point-of-sale machines, smart fridges and washing machines and TVs. While not all of these will use the mobile networks (many may use your alternative internet connection and wifi to connect), it's crucial to check these for 4G and 5G compatibility, as they may be relying on the 3G network for connectivity.

Examples of devices that may use the 3G network currently are:

- Phones
- Tablets/iPads
- Modems
- Medical devices
- Devices and equipment that extend mobile reception such as antennas
- EFTPOS machines
- IoT equipment such as farming probes and sensors, or monitoring cameras for watering etc.

**Q7: Is the IoT network the same as my broadband connection?**

A7: No, the Internet of Things (IoT) devices often use different networks to connect and communicate. These networks can include specialised low-power wide-area networks (LPWAN) that are not the same as your home's broadband connection. It's important to consider this distinction when preparing for the 3G shutdown.

**Q8: What is WiFi calling and how can it help?**

A8: WiFi calling allows you to make voice calls through a WiFi network instead of using your carrier's broadband network. This can be especially useful in areas with poor cellular coverage or during the transition from 3G to more advanced networks. Ensure your device supports WiFi calling and it's enabled in your settings. Visit the [Regional Tech Hub website](#) for information on how to get the best possible mobile phone service and for more information on [WiFi Calling](#).

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### Q9: What happens to my 3G device after the network is shut down?

A9: You do not need to do anything for compatible devices. Once the 3G network is shut down, any devices that rely solely on 3G for connectivity will no longer be able to make calls, send texts, or access the internet via phone data. It's essential to upgrade to a device that supports 4G or 5G to continue using mobile services.

### Q10: Can I still use my 3G phone for emergencies?

A10: Even after the 3G shutdown, most mobile phones should still be able to call emergency services like 000. However, it's crucial to verify this functionality with your service provider and consider upgrading to a newer device for reliability.

### Q11: How do I know if my current mobile plan will work with a 4G or 5G device?

A11: Contact your service provider to discuss your current plan and whether it's compatible with 4G or 5G devices. Providers often offer various plans tailored to newer networks, which may also include additional benefits.

### Q12: Will my current SIM card work in a 4G or 5G device?

A12: In most cases, SIM cards are compatible across different generations of networks, but some older SIM cards may not support all the features of 4G or 5G networks. Check with your service provider to see if you need a new SIM card for your 4G or 5G device.

### Q13: How can I dispose of my old 3G device responsibly?

A13: Many service providers, electronics stores, and nonprofit organisations offer recycling programs for old mobile phones and electronic devices. Look for an e-waste recycling program in your area to ensure your device is disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.

### Q14: What are the benefits of upgrading to 4G or 5G?

A14: Upgrading to 4G or 5G offers several benefits, including faster internet speeds, improved call quality, and access to new services and technologies that are not available on 3G networks. These advancements can enhance your overall mobile experience.

### Q15: How do I ensure my other connected devices (tablets, smartwatches) are ready for the 3G shutdown?

A15: Check the specifications of each device to determine its network compatibility. For devices that are not 4G or 5G capable, you may need to consider upgrading to continue enjoying connectivity. Manufacturers or service providers can offer guidance on compatible models.

### Q16: What if I live in an area with limited 4G or 5G coverage?

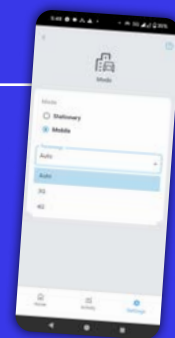
A16: If you're in an area with limited next-generation network coverage, explore options like WiFi calling or the use of network extenders. Additionally, communicating with your service provider about coverage concerns can help, as they may have solutions or plans for network expansion in your area. Just because you don't get 4G or 5G coverage now, doesn't mean that you won't it when the 3G network is turned off. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing until the 3G network is deactivated.

## How can I check if my device is 3G only or if it supports 4G/5G?

Checking whether your device is limited to 3G or supports newer networks like 4G and 5G is straightforward:

- **Device Specifications:** The simplest way is to look up your device's specifications online. Manufacturer websites or tech review sites usually list this information. Look for the "Network" or "Connectivity" section in your device's specifications.
- **Settings Menu:** On most smartphones, you can check network capabilities by going into the settings menu. For example, on an Android device, go to "Settings" > "Network & Internet" > "Mobile Network" > "Preferred network type." On an iPhone, navigate to "Settings" > "Cellular" > "Cellular Data Options" > "Voice & Data." If options include 4G (LTE) or 5G, your device supports these networks.
- **SIM Card Status:** Some devices display network information based on the SIM card's capabilities. Inserting your SIM into a different phone that you know is 4G or 5G compatible can help determine if the SIM—and by extension, potentially your device—supports these networks.
- **Service Provider Help:** If you're unsure, contact your mobile service provider. They can tell you whether your device is 3G only based on your account details and the device's IMEI number.
- For Telstra customers, there is a very simple tool to let you know if your phone is compatible. Simply text the number 3 to 3498, and you will receive a message advising of your phone's compatibility and any actions you might need to take.

**Remember, even if your device supports 4G or 5G, you might need to update your plan or SIM card to access these networks fully.**



## Telecommunication Provider Resources

### TELSTRA

Telstra intends to switch off their 3G network in June 2024. You can find out more about what these changes mean for you [here](#). Telstra also have a number of fact sheets and other resources available regarding the transition, including a [video](#) explaining their use of technologies for connectivity, and another short [video](#) explaining the 3G closure.

Telstra particularly emphasises the importance of checking your phones.

Some older 4G phones will not be capable of making emergency calls and connecting to Triple Zero when 3G shuts off. As a general guide, your device manual or manufacturer should be able to tell you whether your specific device supports VoLTE Emergency Calling.

Any customer with a phone manufactured prior to 2019 (more than four years old) should:

- check their device manual,
- visit their device manufacturer's website,
- contact the retailer that sold the handset,
- or visit one of our stores for assistance.

Telstra is working with the government, ACMA and other mobile network operators to identify and advise customers they know are affected by this to check their devices and their likely need to upgrade.

For more information you can access the [Telstra Exchange Blog](#) which features more information and frequently asked questions. You can also visit their [3G closure website](#) which contains step-by-step information on what to do.

**NOTE:** Telstra GO Repeaters operate on both 3G and 4G and will **not** be impacted when 3G closes on 30 June 2024. **However**, some repeaters may have been switched manually to only operate on 3G. To help customers check this, we have prepared some easy-to-follow [instructions](#).

### OPTUS

Optus plans to shut down remaining 3G services from September 2024. You can find out more about these changes and what you should do [here](#).

### VODAFONE

Vodafone shut down their 3G services in late 2023. You can find out more about these changes and what you should do [here](#).

If your mobile service is through another provider, and you're not sure which of these three networks they use, we suggest contacting them to see if you need to make any changes to your devices. Each company or Telco is aware of which of their customers are using 3G enabled devices, which may include some farm machinery, older mobile phones, and some point-of-sale devices. They will usually contact those customers prior to any changes.

## NextG/NGWL specific information

Next G Wireless Link (NGWL) uses the Telstra Next G® (3G mobile phone) network to give customers access to a voice and internet service. Data plans on these services are traditionally limited to 25GB, contract based and are quite expensive. Strictly speaking, it's not actually a landline service, as it's using the mobile phone network to provide the services. However, no SIM is required to access the service.

It's offered to selected customers as an alternative to a standard fixed line service, in certain circumstances. You cannot choose to use the NGWL. NGWL will be phased out and replaced with Telstra's 4G Home Voice by 30th June 2024, when Telstra have committed to turning off their 3G network.

People using NGWL should be proactive in contacting Telstra on 1800 258 503 to place orders for their new 4G Home Voice connection well before 30 June 2024. For more information, visit the [Regional Tech Hub website](#).