

# PROJECT AGREEMENT FOR THE LOCATION-BASED SOLUTION – NATIONAL TELEPHONE-BASED EMERGENCY WARNING CAPABILITY

Council of  
Australian  
Governments

An agreement between

- the Commonwealth of Australia and
- the State of Victoria

The output of the project will be the development and implementation of enhancements to the existing *Emergency Alert* system, which will enable the States and Territories to deliver warnings to mobile telephones based on the last known location of the handset at the time of an emergency.

# Project Agreement for the Location-Based Solution – National Telephone-Based Emergency Warning Capability

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT  
ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS

## PRELIMINARIES

1. This Project Agreement (the Agreement) is created subject to the provisions of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations* and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement and its Schedules, which provide information in relation to performance reporting and payment arrangements under the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*.
2. The Agreement is separate and subsequent to the expired National Partnership Agreement “Development of a Telephone-Based National Emergency Warning System” (2009), which provided for the establishment of the *Emergency Alert* system. *Emergency Alert* delivers voice messages to landlines and SMS messages to mobile telephones based on the customer’s registered service address.
3. This Agreement will support enhancements to the existing *Emergency Alert* system through the delivery of the national Location-Based Solution (LBS) (the project). *Emergency Alert* and the LBS are components of the National Telephone-Based Emergency Warning Capability (the Capability).
4. This Agreement will enable a significant enhancement of the current ability of the States and Territories (the States) to provide warnings to their communities during an emergency. The LBS will enable the delivery of SMS warnings to mobile telephones based on the last known location of handsets at the time of an emergency.
5. The States have agreed that the Victorian Government will undertake the procurement process for the engagement of the telecommunications carriers (Telstra, Optus and Vodafone Hutchison Australia (VHA) (the carriers)) to deliver the LBS.

## PART 1 – FORMALITIES

### Parties to this Agreement

6. This Agreement is between the Commonwealth of Australia (the Commonwealth) and the State of Victoria (Victoria).

### Term of the Agreement

7. This Agreement will commence once the Commonwealth and Victoria sign the Agreement and will expire on 30 November 2013 or on completion of the project, including the acceptance of final performance reporting and processing of the final payment against milestones, unless terminated earlier or extended in writing by the Parties.

## PART 2 – PROJECT OUTPUT

### Output

8. The output of this Agreement will be the development and implementation of the LBS, meeting the obligations set out in the contracts and relevant technical specification documents between Victoria and the carriers.

## PART 3 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PARTY

### Role of the Commonwealth

9. Under this Agreement, the Commonwealth will provide a financial contribution to Victoria towards the establishment costs incurred in the procurement and development of the LBS.
10. In making this financial contribution, the Commonwealth does not accept any responsibility or liability for the development, ownership, ongoing maintenance or operation of the Capability, or how and when the Capability will be used.

### Role of Victoria

11. As the lead State, Victoria will be responsible for:
  - (a) negotiations with the carriers, subsequent execution of contracts, and overall project oversight from development through to deployment of the LBS on behalf of all States;
  - (b) ensuring appropriate mechanisms that govern the relationship between Victoria, the carriers and participating States for the operation of *Emergency Alert*, incorporate the LBS, including:
    - (i) the ongoing contractual and usage costs,

- (ii) contributing to the ongoing maintenance and operation, including, but not limited to, training, and
- (iii) ensuring the development of appropriate public education and awareness materials to inform the Australian public about location-based mobile telephone emergency warnings and how and when they will be used.

## Shared roles

12. The Parties will meet the requirements of Schedule E, Clause 26 of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*, by ensuring that prior agreement is reached on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional material or publicity relating to activities under this Agreement, and that the roles of both Parties will be acknowledged and recognised appropriately.

## PART 4 – PROJECT MILESTONES, REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

13. The following table summarises the milestones for the project, its relationship to the output, the expected completion dates, the relevant reporting dates and expected payment to be made, once a report certifying that the milestones have been met is received and accepted.

**Table 1: Milestones, reporting and payment summary**

Output	Milestones	Date due	Relevant Report due	Payment
The development and implementation of enhancements to the existing <i>Emergency Alert</i> system, which will enable the States and Territories to deliver warnings to mobile telephones based on the last known location of the handset at the time of an emergency	Contract execution between Victoria and Telstra to develop and provide the LBS on its network and to deliver the necessary changes to the <i>Emergency Alert</i> platform to support the LBS from the other carriers	31 May 2012	7 June 2012	\$26.2 m
	LBS implemented and operational across all carriers	31 October 2013	30 November 2013	

## Reporting arrangements

14. Victoria will prepare a final Project Report within 30 days of the completion of the project agreed under the Project Agreement. The Project Report will be a stand-alone document that can be used for public information dissemination purposes. The final Project Report will:

- (a) describe the conduct, benefits and outcomes of the project;
- (b) evaluate the project from Victoria's perspective, including assessing the extent to which the project milestones have been achieved and why any aspect was not achieved;
- (c) describe public education activities undertaken in relation to the project; and
- (d) include a discussion of any other matters relating to the project, limited to the minimum necessary for the effective assessment of performance, and agreed between the Commonwealth and Victoria at least 60 days before it is due.

## PART 5 – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 15. The Commonwealth will provide a financial contribution to Victoria of \$26.2 million in respect of this Agreement. All payments are GST exclusive.
- 16. The Commonwealth's funding contribution will not be reduced should Victoria secure funding from other activity partners through innovative and collaborative partnerships.
- 17. The Commonwealth's financial contribution to the operation of this Agreement, including through National Partnership payments to the States paid in accordance with Schedule D — Payment Arrangements of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*, is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Estimated financial contributions**

(\$ million)	2011-12
<b>Estimated total budget</b>	41.5
Less estimated National Partnership Agreement Payment	26.2
Other Commonwealth contributions	7.0
Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	8.3

- 18. Having regard to the agreed estimated costs of the project specified in a Project Agreement, Victoria will not be required to pay a refund to the Commonwealth if the actual cost of the project is less than the agreed estimated cost of the project. Similarly, Victoria bears all risk should the costs of a project exceed the agreed estimated costs. Should the costs of the project exceed the agreed estimated costs, Victoria can pursue contributions towards required additional funding from the other States, under arrangements outside of this Agreement. The Parties acknowledge that this arrangement provides the maximum incentive for Victoria to deliver the project cost effectively and efficiently. The Commonwealth contribution is firmly fixed at \$33.2 million, irrespective of the final project cost.
- 19. Under this Agreement, if the LBS is not implemented and operational across all carriers by 31 October 2013, the Commonwealth will require Victoria to return to the Commonwealth all unexpended and uncommitted Commonwealth funding, subject to written confirmation from the Commonwealth of this requirement.

## PART 6 – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

### Enforceability of the Agreement

20. The Parties do not intend any of the provisions of this Agreement to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to this Agreement.

### Variation of the Agreement

21. The Agreement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing by the Parties.
22. A Party to the Agreement may terminate their participation in the Agreement at any time by notifying all the other Parties in writing.

### Delegations

23. The relevant Commonwealth Minister with responsibility for emergency management, delegates the assessment of performance against the milestones and the authorisation of the related project payment to senior Commonwealth officials, having regard to the financial and policy risks associated with this payment.

### Dispute resolution

24. A Party may give notice to the other Party of a dispute under this Agreement.
25. Officials of the relevant Parties will attempt to resolve any dispute in the first instance.
26. If a dispute cannot be resolved by officials, it may be escalated to the relevant Ministers and if necessary, the relevant Standing Council.
27. If a dispute cannot be resolved by the relevant Ministers, it may be referred by a Party to COAG for consideration.

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this Agreement as follows:

**Signed** for and on behalf of the Commonwealth  
of Australia by

**Signed** for and on behalf of the  
State of Victoria by

**The Honourable Nicola Roxon MP**  
Attorney-General  
Minister for Emergency Management

13/6/2012

**The Honourable Peter Ryan MP**  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

5/6/2012

## Canberra and States balk at cost of early-warning fire alert system, says newspaper

The AustralianIT reports that Canberra and the states balked at the \$20 million cost of a telephone-based alert system that would have given early warning of the deadly Black Saturday bushfires, a secret report shows.

The confidential review for Victoria's State Emergency Service in December 2007, obtained by The Australian, reveals that the technology to bombard mobile and fixed phones with danger messages had been trialled successfully for the agency.

While the test run of Telstra's Community Information and Warning System was for flooding, the Victorian SES found it would work "for all types of hazard", including bushfire. Despite this, the system was not introduced because the Howard government and the states bickered over the expense.

The internal report for the Victorian SES concluded: "Apparently governments are baulking at ... their contribution to the \$20 million cost." The Australian revealed yesterday that the federal Government was fast-tracking legislative changes to give emergency services in the states access to a national database of phone numbers so people could be warned on mobile and fixed phones of bushfires and other natural disaster threats.

The official death toll in the horrifying bushfires that ripped through communities north and east of Melbourne remains at 181 but is expected to rise to 300 as police, soldiers and emergency crews continue the search for bodies in the ashes of more than 1000 homes.

A spokesman for Premier John Brumby confirmed last night that Victoria "has been very keen" to set up a national telephone alert system. "It did stall for many years," he said. It is understood that NSW and Western Australia opposed the Telstra scheme, and that the then federal Coalition government was also cold on introducing it.

Western Australia has been pushing for national expansion of its own version of the "electronic doorknock" system, which is cheaper than Telstra's. But the Victorian SES concluded that the WA service was inferior because it was limited to residential numbers listed in the White Pages. Phone alerts could not be sent to mobile phones or through company switchboards.

The report by consultants Molino Stewart for the Victorian SES said the Telstra system had been tested successfully in Stawell, northwest of Melbourne, and Mount Evelyn, east of the

city. "Would be a good system for all types of hazard alert," it said. "This has the advantage over the current systems, which need opt in and need to keep numbers updated."

However, the Telstra model failed to provide "the opportunity to keep the community educated about the system". The report to the Victorian SES noted this was mitigated by "having a single system for all hazards across the state or even the country".

West Australian Emergency Services Minister Rob Johnson yesterday wrote to federal Attorney-General Robert McClelland urging him to fast-track changes to the Telecommunications Act during the next sitting of parliament to give state emergency services access to the national database of phone numbers.

Otherwise, Australia-wide introduction of a phone alert system would be held up for a further six months. "I know governments are often criticised for going at a snail's pace, but we've seen the tragic events in Victoria and I want to avoid a similar event happening here," Mr Johnson told The Australian yesterday. "This is something that can give our community the earliest possible alert of fires raging towards them, floods and terrorist attacks, through phones, SMS messages, fax or email. "It's absolutely essential, in my view."

Mr McClelland last night said there had been no possibility a phone system could have been introduced ahead of last Saturday's bushfire tragedy in Victoria, the nation's worst. "Our target will be to have it up and running by the next fire season," he said.

Western Australia's StateAlert system had been offered to the other states and territories for free, yet none had taken it up as some were interested in Telstra's more costly Community Information and Warning System. Western Australia has spent \$460,000 developing StateAlert, which automatically calls all phones in a designated area, as well as mobile phones that are registered via a website, at a rate of 40,000 messages every 15 minutes.

The running costs would be \$300,000 a year. Telstra's system - which would automatically call and text-message every mobile and landline phone within a selected area - has been costed at \$40million to \$66 million to introduce nationally over five years, with ongoing costs of \$1.7million to \$2.6 million a year.

"Some states may want to go with the Telstra system but in Western Australia we believe we can do it at less cost financially to the community," Mr Johnson said. He said all states and territories wanted some form of emergency alert. "All that's holding it up is the ability to have access to people's telephone numbers," he said.

"I have urged the federal Government to speed up the process. They could probably do (the legislative amendment) in one page ... I would like it done in the next few weeks. I am personally disappointed it's taken so long," Mr Johnson said his predecessor had written six months ago to the Attorney-General as well as to Communications Minister Stephen Conroy, asking that they expedite changes to the Telecommunications Act.

In his letter to Mr McClelland yesterday, Mr Johnson said the Act was the only impediment to Western Australia using StateAlert this bushfire season.

A Telstra spokesman last night refused to comment on the cost of its system, citing commercial-in-confidence discussions with the states

# Telstra grilled over cost of Emergency Alert Service

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By [John Hilvert](#) on Aug 10, 2011 6:12 AM  
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## Emergency services fear price-gouging.

A Telstra-run national emergency warning system underwritten by the Federal Government came under fire during a [Senate Committee](#) this week over concerns the telco was unfairly profiting from the service.

Telstra representatives faced a series of questions from a Senate Committee over how its emergency alert system operated and what it charged emergency services organisations to use it.

Telstra's senior government relations advisor Jamie Snashall appeared uncomfortable when asked to describe the dollars and cents of the emergency alert service.

He said costs was an issue Telstra would take on notice.

Back in 2009, the Australian Government committed \$26.3 million in a selective tender to assist the States and Territories develop a national emergency warning capability. Optus and Telstra were the only bidders, with other organisations being invited to approach the two carriers.

The resulting [National Emergency Warning System was put to the test](#) during the recent floods in Queensland.

Snashall said the emergency service was similar to normal SMS messages and its "users" - the emergency services organisations - bear the cost.

Pressed by Liberal Party Senator Garry Humphries over who in fact paid for the SMS transmission, Snashall responded that he “could not tell directly.”

“My understanding is that emergency services authorities have a contract and bear the cost,” Snashall said.

Snashall was more certain the cost would not be borne by Telstra as part of its Universal Service Obligation.

Chairman of the Committee, Labor Senator Doug Cameron asked Telstra to explain the commercial arrangement and how it might minimise the cost to emergency service operators.

“The argument they (emergency service organisations) are putting to us is that they don’t want to be beholden to a commercial operator who would charge a premium for emergency service operations,” Senator Cameron said.

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Read more: <http://www.itnews.com.au/News/266195,telstra-grilled-over-cost-of-emergency-alert-service.aspx#ixzz30hHRsvHt>

## **Australia’s emergency alerting system**

*On September 13, 2011, in [CAP](#), [Featured Posts](#), by [Greg Trott](#) with The Attorney-General's Department, Australian Federal Government*

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This article is the first of five articles that I plan to contribute during the next 12 months, which will highlight what is happening in Australia with the [Common Alerting Protocol \(CAP\)](#). This article introduces the emergency management system that currently operates in Australia and future topics will cover:

- What the Australian CAP Profile is seeking to achieve.
- What process is Australia using to develop the Australian CAP Profile.
- Lessons Learned during development of the Australian CAP Profile.
- Australia’s future intentions with CAP.

The Australian Government [Attorney-General's Department](#) (AGD) is working closely with the [Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards](#) (OASIS) in the USA to develop a [CAP Profile for Australia](#) (CAP-AU), which is scheduled for public release by June 2012. The AGD, among other things, has responsibility for the Australian Government's role in emergency management. One of the outcomes that AGD seeks to achieve is coordinated federal emergency management activity to ensure a safer Australia.

## Emergency Alerting Systems in Australia

Australia's emergency alerting systems focus on enhancing the protection of human lives. These systems are mostly run by emergency service organisations in our states and territories, including: Fire, Rescue, Police, Health, Transport, and Infrastructure. A national approach to emergency warnings and alerts is achieved through collective efforts based on partnerships of the Commonwealth, States (6), Territories (2), local and regional governments, non-government organisations, industry and the community. Alert messages in Australia are typically generated by an emergency service using approved message templates. Distribution of alert messages is usually achieved to networked sites, RSS feeds, media broadcasters, fixed and mobile telephones, and other mobile devices. The following systems are used throughout Australia to facilitate notification of alerting and warning messages:

- [Emergency Alert](#) is the national telephone-based emergency warning system that has been operational since 1 December 2009. Emergency Alert is operational in all States and Territories with the exception of the Australian State of Western Australia who operate their own telephone warning system. Emergency Alert sends alerts within a defined area to landline telephones based on the location of the phone and to mobile phones based on the registered service address.
- [StateAlert](#) has been implemented in the Australian State of Western Australia as a multi-agency, all hazards public emergency warning system that sends critical messages to people whose lives may be in danger. The warnings can be sent via voice messages to mobile and/or fixed phones and text messages to mobile phones (based on the customers billing address), email and RSS feeds. StateAlert also has an opt-in function that enables members of the community to register mobile and/or fixed phone details for up to three separate addresses.

- **Emergency telephone Hotlines** are available across Australia to enable the community to report emergencies, crime, and national security matters. The main all-hazards emergency telephone number across Australia is 000 (known as “Triple Zero”) or 112 on mobile telephone devices, which is analogous to the 911 service provided in North America.
- **Earthquake and Tsunami alert system.** The [Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre](#) (JATWC) is operated by Geoscience Australia, and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. The Centre monitors earthquake activity to detect any potential to generate tsunamis around Australia and its external territories. A network of sea level monitoring equipment is used to warn the Australian community of potential tsunami impacts. Geoscience is responsible for releasing earthquake related messages and the Bureau is responsible for issuing the relevant tsunami warnings and bulletins, usually through media outlets, primarily television and radio station networks.
- **[One Source One Message](#)** (OSOM) is a system used in the State of Victoria to provide emergency service organisations with a single source of information for emergency warnings and advice. OSOM provides the ability to publish warnings from Incident Control Centres direct to Emergency Service agency websites and simultaneously inform support organisations, the Victorian Bushfire Information Line and emergency broadcasters. This capability also includes automatic posting of warnings and advice to a twitter feed. Alerting of the public remains the responsibility of the Emergency Alert and State Alert systems in all States.
- **Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)** is an attention grabbing signal that is transmitted over radio stations, television broadcasts or telephone messages ahead of an emergency alert, warning or public advice message relating to a major emergency or disaster. SEWS is used very selectively in order to draw attention to a follow-on warning or advice about a rapid-onset emergency or disaster.

## Australia’s CAP Profile

CAP is currently used in all the systems mentioned above except for the telephone hotlines and SEWS where it does not apply, but provides the flexibility and potential to be adapted to interface with these systems if a requirement emerges. The Australian CAP Profile will be aligned with the OASIS CAP version 1.2 standard, and will provide

the Australian community with a common and standardised approach to deliver warning and alerting messages that have been tailored to the Australian emergency management environment.

*Image courtesy of [New South Wales Police Force, Australia](#).*

Tagged with: [alerts and warnings](#) • [CAP](#) • [CAP-AU](#) • [Common Alerting Protocol - Australia Profile](#) • [International](#) • [Standards](#)



About the author

## **Greg Trott**

Greg Trott is a Project Manager in the Attorney-General's Department of the Australian federal government responsible for developing the Common Alerting Protocol - Australia Profile. He previously served in the Royal Australian Air Force from 1982 - 2010, managing the delivery of an array of air power projects, development Air Base support requirements, and construction of a deployable operations support capability for an airborne surveillance system.