

mobile inSite

news, issues and science on mobile
telecommunications deployment

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Editorial

Welcome to the March 2010 edition of *Mobile InSite*, the Mobile Carriers Forum's newsletter on news, science and policy decisions about mobile telecommunications networks.

In this edition we focus on the link between customer demands for mobile phone network coverage and high speed wireless broadband access and the need for timely approval and certainty in the planning system. Our article about new planning laws introduced in the US is a good example of how governments can implement a planning system to limit delays, while also respect the legitimate concerns of local authorities and preserve local control over zoning and land use policies.

The new US planning laws, referred to as a 'shot clock', directs state and local governments to review co-location applications within 90 days and all other base station siting applications within 150 days of the date a carrier submits a proposal. This approach provides certainty

and will limit delays which have seen some applications pending for more than three years.

An example of potential uncertainty in the planning system is shown in our article about Queensland Member of Parliament Michael Johnson's proposal to introduce new laws to make it illegal to build mobile phone towers within 300 metres of schools, kindergartens, hospitals or retirement homes.

Mr Johnson's proposal would seriously threaten the ability of mobile network carriers to provide mobile coverage because these places are commonplace throughout all suburban areas. It also doesn't take into account how mobile phone networks operate, because in most circumstances the best location to build base stations in order to minimise emissions, is closest to where those services are required.

Other issues covered in this edition include a new research report on the impact of mobile phone



towers on property values, presentations from scientists who attended the Science and Wireless workshop hosted by the ACRBR in Melbourne, and a government audit of mobile phone base station sites which shows exposures are well within safety standards.

As always we appreciate any feedback from our stakeholders within industry, government and the community about any of the stories in this edition.

Matt Evans

Program Manager
Mobile Carriers Forum

Experts at Melbourne workshop conclude mobile phone towers are too weak to cause health effects

Mobile phone base stations do not cause any health problems because the radio waves they use to operate are too weak, and could be compared to the light emitted by a full moon, according to a leading scientist who represents the agency responsible for setting international guidelines for mobile phones and base station safety standards.

Dr Bernard Veyret, a member of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation



Dr Colin Roy, director of the non-ionising radiation branch of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency.

Protection (ICNIRP), was in Melbourne in November to attend the Science and Wireless 2009 workshop hosted by the Australian Centre for RF Bioeffects Research.

Videos of the presentations from ACRBR's 2009 Science and Wireless workshop can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

During his key note speech, Dr Veyret said the consensus of scientific evidence showed there was no reason to be concerned about the safety of base stations.

“Base stations have been excluded from other source of risk for a few years... If the rumors are still going on and saying that these [base stations] are dangerous, the science is saying the base stations are not dangerous,” Dr Veyret said.



Dr Bernard Veyret says the radio waves used by base stations can be compared to the light emitted by a full moon.

He explained that the exposure limits for electromagnetic emissions were very conservative and that measurement surveys of the radio waves emitted by base stations using GSM technology (2G) generally found they operate at about 10,000 times below the limits. However, he said for Wi-Fi and 3G technology, the radio waves were 100,000 times below the safety limits.

Continued next page

Experts at Melbourne workshop conclude mobile phone towers are too weak to cause health effects

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“You can compare this to the light emitted by the full moon,” Dr Veyret said.

A video of Dr Bernard Veyret’s presentation can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Following Dr Veyret, the Science and Wireless workshop heard from the Australian government agency responsible for setting the safety standard limit for mobile phone and base station emissions.

Dr Colin Roy, director of the non-ionising radiation branch of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), said his agency is continually reviewing the science related to radio frequency fields and health.

“We’ve undertaken to look at the science underpinning the RF standard. The ARPANSA

standard was published in 2002 and a lot of science has been published since then. We’ve indicated to our radiation health committee that we’ll undertake a review of the science... and on the basis of that review we’ll make a recommendation to the radiation health committee as to whether or not a full review of our RF standard is required,” Dr Roy said.

He also noted that ICNIRP reaffirmed their safety guidelines last year.

Dr Roy said the World Health Organisation states current scientific evidence indicates that exposure to RF fields, such as those emitted by mobile phones and their base stations, is unlikely to induce or promote cancers.

A video of Dr Colin Roy’s presentation can be found at:

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US 'shot clock' on tower applications a good idea, say Australian carriers



In basketball, players must attempt to score before the 24 second shot clock expires.

The Mobile Carriers Forum has welcomed a move by US regulators to reduce bureaucratic delays in the deployment of mobile phone networks by setting a nationwide maximum of 150 days for state and local governments to review applications for new mobile phone base stations.

The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted the declaratory ruling last November which directs state and local governments to review co-location applications within 90 days and all other base station siting applications within 150 days of the date a carrier submits a proposal.

The FCC says sites that fail to be processed in the new timeframes can be settled in court.

The ruling reflects a Congressional mandate that requires state and local authorities act

“within a reasonable period of time” on requests for base station siting. The commission noted that creating a wireless, nationwide broadband system “will require new physical networks, including many new towers.”

The FCC declaratory ruling can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The issue of base station application delays was forced onto the agenda in the US by the wireless industry association, the CTIA, when it filed a petition asking the FCC to impose a ‘shot clock’ on state and local authorities. The reference to a ‘shot clock’ comes from professional basketball, where players must attempt to score before the 24 second shot clock expires, or lose possession of the ball.

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US 'shot clock' on tower applications a good idea, say Australian carriers

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The CTIA filed the petition on behalf of its member companies in response to continued delays by local zoning boards. In some cases, applications were taking up to three years to be processed.

The CTIA petition to the FCC can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski acknowledged that despite Congress's strong statement on ensuring a timely process of site applications, history has shown that delays have continued to persist in many states and localities.

"For example, at the time the petition was filed, of the 3,300 pending zoning applications for wireless facilities, over 760 had been pending for more than a year and 180 had been pending for



FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said the new timeframes will assist in speeding the deployment of next generation wireless networks.

more than three years. There is evidence that in certain jurisdictions the tower siting process is getting longer, even as the need for more towers and for timely decisions is growing," Mr Genachowski said.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski's statement can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The FCC said the new timeframes "will assist in speeding the deployment of next generation wireless networks while respecting the legitimate concerns of local authorities and preserving local control over zoning and land use policies".

"The FCC decision achieves a balance by defining reasonable and achievable timeframes for State and local governments to act on zoning applications while not dictating any substantive outcome on any particular case or otherwise limiting State and local governments' fundamental authority over local land use."

The FCC announcement of the declaratory ruling can be found at:

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US 'shot clock' on tower applications a good idea, say Australian carriers

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MCF Program Manager Matt Evans said Australia's three mobile phone network carriers were closely watching the deployment scene in the US because of similar problems caused by inconsistent planning rules across Australia.

"Australia's mobile phone network carriers have experienced significant difficulties in some localities when trying to provide mobile phone coverage and access to high speed broadband. Inconsistent planning rules between Australia's states and territories, and between local councils, have caused huge delays for carriers trying to provide the benefits of mobile communications to local communities," Mr Evans said.

"In some cases, carriers meet all the stated policy requirements in their development application for a new tower, but are still refused a development application by councils. In one case, a carrier had been delayed in excess of three and half years

and had spent more than \$150,000 without an outcome, due to actions by a council. In another case, the matter was taken to the NSW Land & Environment Court where after three years of disagreement, the carrier involved won the case and the council, and its rate payers, were forced to pay the significant costs of the court proceedings," Mr Evans said.

Mr Evans said Australia's mobile phone carriers would welcome a similar approach to the one that has been adopted in the US.

"We share the FCC's concerns about finding the right balance between creating a favourable regulatory environment for future investment that also preserves local control over zoning and land use policies. This is why we are closely watching the developments in the US and speaking with state and local governments about this important issue."



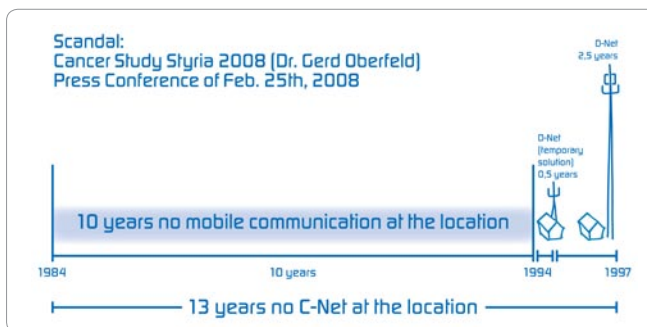
Austrian mobile tower cancer cluster study withdrawn

An Austrian study which reported an alleged cancer cluster around a mobile phone base station in two villages near the city of Graz has been withdrawn. A recent court case at the Salzburg Regional Court found evidence that no base station existed in that area during the period in question.

In early 2008 a self-published study by Dr Gerd Oberfeld, an occupational health physician at the Salzburg Public Health Department, claimed a base station built on a local telephone exchange owned by mobilkom austria and operated from 1984 to 1997, was responsible for an 8.5-increased rate of all cancers in nearby residents.

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When first published the study received worldwide attention and is often used to support claims there is scientific proof that base stations cause health effects.



According to FMK, no base station existed in the town between 1984 and 1994.

Dr Oberfeld distributed an English-language press release to promote the study worldwide. He also provided an executive summary of the study to the Austrian Ministry of Health and requested a full investigation of the alleged cancer cluster.

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Immediately the network operator, mobilkom austria, said the base station on the Hausmannstätten telephone exchange never existed at the time claimed by Dr. Oberfeld.

“During the first 10 years of the specified investigation period from 1984-1997 no mobile phone station was installed at this location. It is irresponsible when cases of cancer are linked to a mobile phone station that did not exist,” said Heinz Münzer, Head of Infrastructure in the area for mobilkom austria.

Due to the wide-reaching consequences of the study mobilkom austria demanded the study be retracted and described the research as “grossly negligent”.

However, according to a press release by the Austrian mobiles industry group, Forum Mobilkommunikation (FMK) [Forum for Mobile Communication], Dr Oberfeld “refused to accept the clearly proven fact that there was no C-Net [Cellular Network] station in Hausmannstätten and his study therefore had no foundation,” leaving mobilkom austria with “no alternative but to initiate legal proceedings.”

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Austrian mobile tower cancer cluster study withdrawn

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Dr Gerd Oberfeld has withdrawn a study claiming an alleged cancer cluster was caused by a mobile phone base station.

“This kind of scaremonger report has taken the objectivity out of mobile phone discussions in Austria for a long time. Even the politically responsible people are put under pressure from it,” said Maximilian Maier, Managing Director of FMK.

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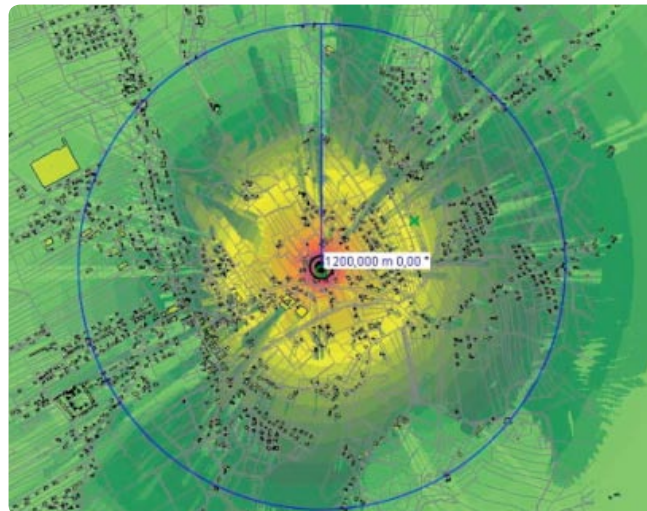
Court evidence including aerial photographs, contemporary witnesses, confirmation from the Ministry of Transport, the official chronology of the site and lists of C-Net sites in the area led to settlement in which Dr Oberfeld’s agreed to withdraw his study.

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Although Dr Oberfeld remained unrepentant, claiming in a statement from his lawyer that the settlement does not mean base stations do not cause cancer.

“It is correct that Dr. Oberfeld acknowledges that there was no C-Network mobile phone transmitter installed at the Hausmannstätten telephone exchange center...”



“[However] the settlement of today certainly does not question the scientific conclusion that mobile phone radiation can be a cause of disease as could be demonstrated in several studies,” the statement from his lawyer said.

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Dr. Oberfeld intends to continue to investigate whether or not other telephone exchange centres in Austria have higher incidences of disease, it added.

“Understandably, Dr. Oberfeld is now trying to save face. But the truth is that there never was a C-Net station in Hausmannstätten, so the study is therefore erroneous and irrelevant,” Maximilian Maier said in response.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Mobile phone towers don't impact house prices

Nearby mobile phone towers have no impact on property values, according to a study conducted by a New Zealand academic.

Dr Olga Filippova, a property lecturer at the University of Auckland, analysed the sale of more than 3000 homes located in close proximity to mobile phone towers across four regions of Auckland.

Dr Filippova told participants at January's Pacific Rim Real Estate Conference, held in Wellington in New Zealand, that she found no evidence that homes located near mobile phone network infrastructure have decreased property values compared to homes located further away.

"Sales that were close to the towers had no significant price impact," Dr Filippova told the *New Zealand Herald*.

The study took place between January 2005 and December 2007, and compared the individual homes' quotable value sale price to their

proximity to 46 mobile phone towers. All of the 3126 homes analysed in the study were located within 500 metres of a mobile phone tower, with the study divided into 50 metre increments.

Although concern about decreased property values is often cited as a reason for community backlash against the installation of new mobile phone towers, Dr Filippova's study has now put to rest such fears.

She added that homeowners with houses located near mobile phone towers may get some relief from her findings.

Dr Filippova said she was surprised by the results of the study, as she had been expecting to find that proximity to cell phone towers would affect the value of homes.

Dr Filippova presented her findings at last month's Pacific Rim Real Estate Conference.

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Changes to federal laws proposed to restrict mobile phone towers near schools

The Federal Member for the Western Brisbane seat of Ryan – Michael Johnson MP – is calling for new phone tower laws to make it illegal to build them within 300 metres of schools, kindergartens, hospitals or retirement homes.

Mr Johnson has proposed an amendment to the *Telecommunications Act (1997)* to mandate safe distances from these sensitive locations and mobile phone towers.

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He also spoke passionately in the Parliament about the deep concerns of the people living in the nearby suburbs of Bardon and Rainworth over Telstra's plans to erect a mobile phone base station in Gerler Street, Bardon which is in his electorate.

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Member for Ryan Michael Johnson is calling for new phone tower laws.

“I want to call on the Federal Government to consider revisiting the relevant telecommunications legislation that might mandate that mobile phone facilities be placed a certain distance away from sensitive spots such as kindergartens and schools, hospitals, aged-care facilities and retirement homes.” Mr Johnson said.

“This is in the interests of not only my constituents, but also constituents around the country represented by other members of Parliament.” Mr Johnson said.

Mr Johnson, a Liberal MP, also called on his neighbouring MP from the electorate of Brisbane Central held by Arch Bevis to join him.

“I call on Arch Bevis to join me in co-sponsoring an amendment to the legislation so we mandate Telstra's mobile phone facilities of the future being a certain distance from sensitive spots like schools,” he said.

But the sitting member for Brisbane Central, Labor's Arch Bevis described Mr Johnson's amendment as a ‘political stunt’ in an interview with ABC radio.

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Changes to federal laws proposed to restrict mobile phone towers near schools

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MCF Program Manager Matt Evans said while well intentioned, such proposals are fundamentally flawed and do not take into account how mobile phone networks operate.

“Well meaning advice to site base stations more than 300 metres away from a school is based on the mistaken belief that the further a base station is away from people the less they would be exposed to the radio wave emissions it uses to communicate,” Mr Evans said.

“However, once a call is connected, both mobile phones and their base stations are designed to operate at the lowest levels to make a quality call. As a precautionary approach base stations are constantly adapting their output levels depending on the number of calls they are handling and how far away the handsets are from them.

“The further a base station is built from a school, the base station will need to operate at a higher

power which could actually increase exposures in that area – the very thing such approaches are trying to avoid.

In most circumstances the best location to build base stations in order to minimise emissions, is closest to where those services are required,” Mr Evans said.

He added that these sorts of proposals also disregarded other sources of radio waves in the everyday environment and only focused on mobile phone technology.

“Sources of radio frequency energy have been in the environment long before mobile phone base stations appeared,” Mr Evans said

A nationwide survey of 60 base stations conducted by the Federal Health Department found that residential areas are exposed to a large number of simultaneous radio sources including digital and analogue television and



Member for Brisbane Central Arch Bevis described Mr Johnson's amendment as a 'political stunt'.

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Changes to federal laws proposed to restrict mobile phone towers near schools

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radio broadcasts which also contribute to public exposure.

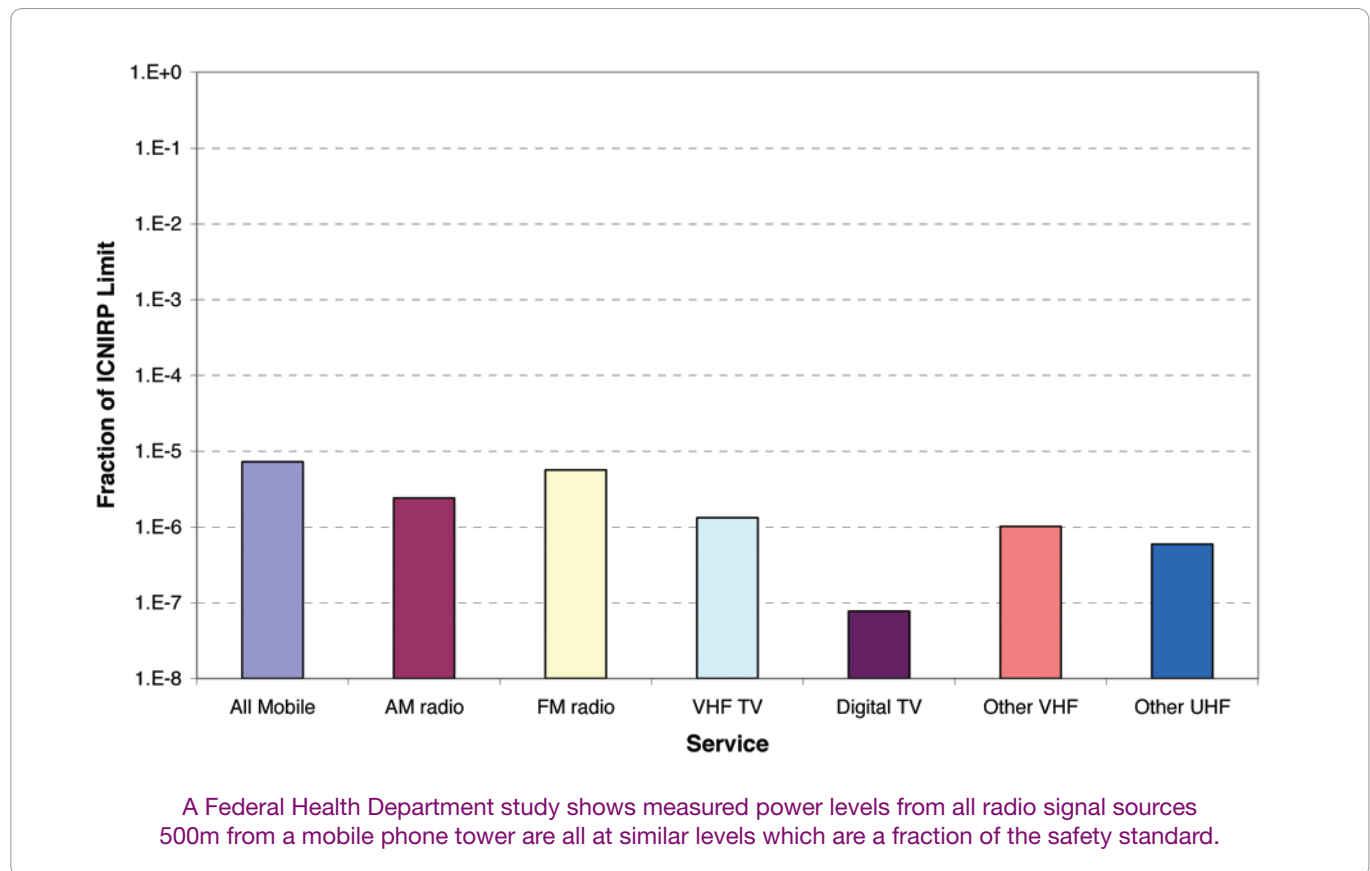
When they weighted and compared these sources with mobile phone base stations they found all the sources were at similar levels.

The electorate of Ryan includes Brisbane’s TV transmission towers on Mount Coot-tha.

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“The mobiles industry has the difficult task to balance the needs of Australia’s 24 million mobile phone subscribers with local community concerns about living and working near a base station,” he said.

Furthermore, the proposed legislative changes would severely restrict community development and create reception black spots or network congestion, which would deny Australians access to the safety, business and personal benefits of mobile communications, Mr Evans said.



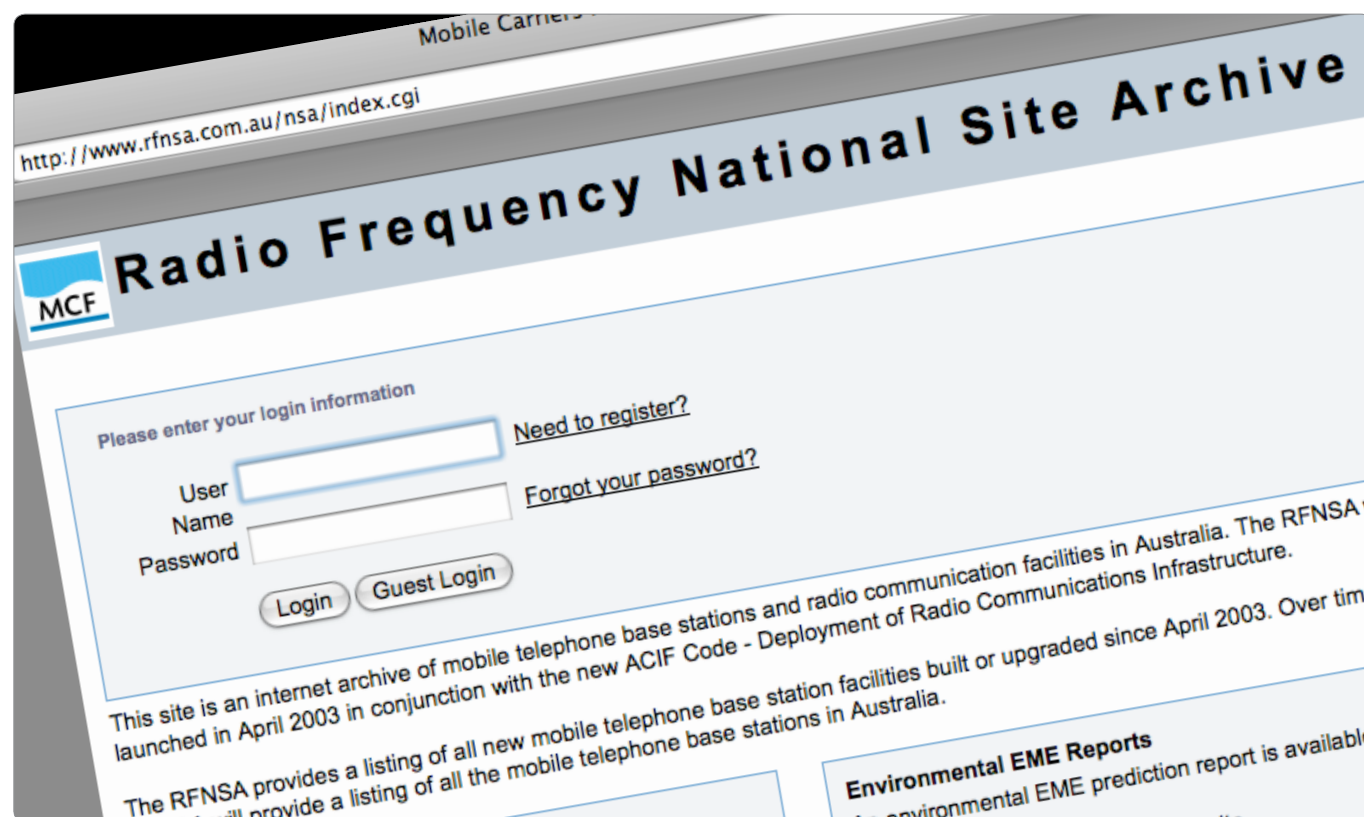
Online base station database receives 13,000 hits on EME levels

More than 13,000 Australians have downloaded site specific information regarding electromagnetic energy (EME) levels around base stations over the past 12 months from the Mobile Carriers Forum's Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA).

The RFNSA public database – www.rfnsa.com.au – was developed by the Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF) in 2001 to provide a listing of more than 15,000 mobile phone base station sites across the country, in response to community requests for better information.

Using a guest login, anyone with access to the Internet can search for EME information for new or upgraded sites in their local area. Searches can be conducted by site name, suburb or postcode.

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Online base station database receives 13,000 hits on EME levels

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In the 12 months to June 30, 2009 an “EME Environmental Report” has been downloaded 13,544 times. These reports provide information regarding the maximum EME level likely to be encountered in the neighbourhood of a mobile phone base station antenna. The levels quoted in these report are typically many hundreds of times below Australia’s EME safety standard.

More information about EME Environment reports can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

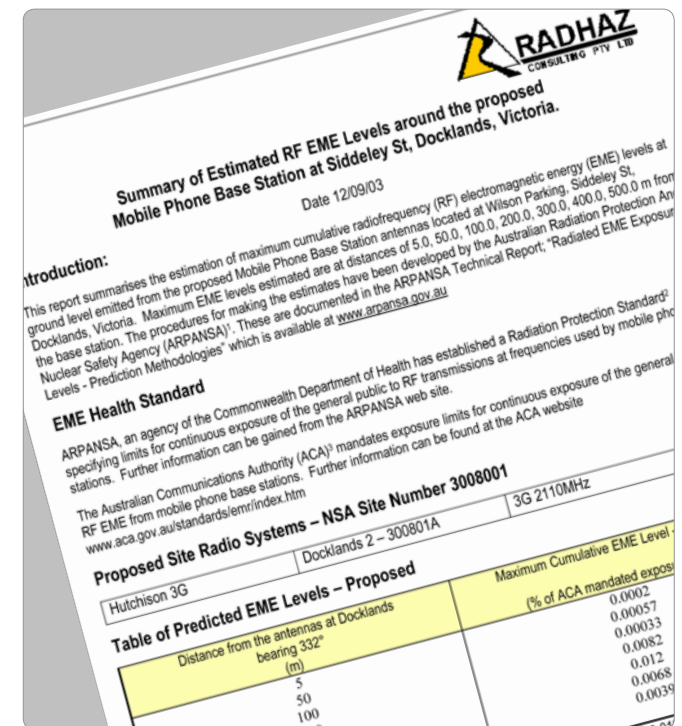
Also in this period, 1,731 visitors downloaded a “Site Compliance Certificate” to verify the base station site meets the requirements of EME safety standards.

MCF Program Manager Matt Evans welcomed the figures as a demonstration of the continuing contribution of the RFNSA as a resource for the Australian community.

“The mobile network carriers have a proud record of operating their mobile networks at precautionary power levels that are significantly lower than the national and international public health and safety limits. The industry remains committed to providing useful information about EME to the community consistent with a precautionary approach”, Mr Evans said.

The RFNSA public database can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)



Tribunal rules Romsey mobile phone tower essential despite its visibility

A controversial Optus 3G mobile phone base station proposal in Romsey – a small town 61 kilometres north of Melbourne– was approved by the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) because it provided essential telecommunication services and the social and economic benefits outweigh the fact that the tower could be seen from some parts of the town.

Local residents objected to the 35-metre monopole because it was considered too close to the local primary school and due to concerns about possible health effects.

Local council planning officers supported the proposed location, which was 500 metres from the school, because it was within an industrial



A photo of the proposed base station in Romsey. The base station in the photo is an artists impression of what the tower will look like.

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Tribunal rules Romsey mobile phone tower essential despite its visibility

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zone. The proposal was also considered appropriate by the planning officers because it satisfied relevant planning scheme guidelines and complied with guidelines for telecommunications facilities.

However the Macedon Ranges Council rejected the application on the grounds it would result in a loss of amenity to the township and be visually intrusive when seen from public parks and school grounds.

VCAT member Geoff Rundell said the tribunal was not the proper authority to inquire if the standards on human exposure to radio frequency were appropriate; his decision was only on the visual amenity of the tower.

“I consider that following its construction, many people will barely notice its presence in the vistas around the town as they go about their daily business,” Mr Rundell said.

“Telecommunications are an essential part of everyday life and essential for a community that includes many people who work and access services some distance from their homes.

‘Improved telecommunications will provide benefits to Romsey’s households and businesses. It will enable residents to contact their family or friends, and to enjoy enhanced access to the internet for information...’

“Improved telecommunications will provide benefits to Romsey’s households and businesses. It will enable residents to contact their family or friends, and to enjoy enhanced access to the internet for information, transactions and bookings. Businesses will have enhanced marketing exposure and their operations will be more efficient.

“The monopole must be visible in order to do its job effectively, as it needs clear sight lines to other antennas. A lower monopole will not provide the telecommunication services to the local residents.

“I find that these social and economic benefits outweigh the partial visibility of the structure from some parts of the town.”

The full ruling can be downloaded here:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Government report shows carriers' consultation practices remain sound

Less than one per cent of new mobile phone base station sites deployed across the country during 2008/09 resulted in a complaint to the government about the carrier's community consultation process, new federal government statistics show.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) tabled its 2008/09 annual report in Parliament on 20 October, and figures within the report show only eight complaints relating to six sites were made about Australia's three network carriers. A total of 1,159 consultations were conducted during the year.

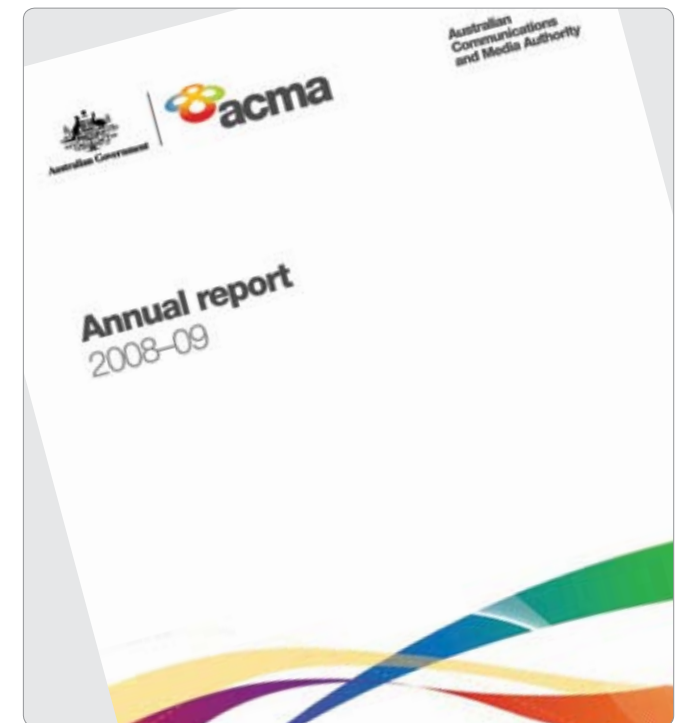
The ACMA annual report can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The planning and installation of mobile phone network infrastructure is subject to the consultation requirements imposed by the ACIF Industry Code (C564:2004 *Deployment of Mobile Phone Network Infrastructure*), registered by ACMA under Part 6 of the Telecommunications Act.

The industry code requires carriers to consult with local councils and the community about the placement of certain mobile phone facilities, typically 'low-impact' facilities. These small radiocommunications antennae and dishes that are considered to have low visual impact can be installed without seeking state, territory or local government planning approval.

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Government report shows carriers' consultation practices remain sound

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Through a complaints process, ACMA monitors carrier compliance with the industry code and has the power to issue formal warnings and directions to carriers to comply with the code.

More information about the ACIF Code can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

MCF Program Manager Matt Evans welcomed the continuing low level of complaints to ACMA regarding the industry's consultation practices when building networks.

"The latest statistics from ACMA demonstrates the ACIF Code continues to have a positive effect with significant amounts of material being distributed to the community during consultation processes. The level of complaints has been maintained at less than 1% of the total number of sites deployed," Mr Evans said.

Year	Number of complaints	Relating to number of sites	Number of sites deployed / consultations conducted (low impact base station sites)
2002 / 03	137	31	Data not captured by ACMA
2003 / 04	48	28	> 1,300
2004 / 05	42	25	> 1,100
2005 / 06	27	20	3,639 consultations conducted
2006 / 07	31	21	1,292 consultations conducted
2007 / 08	6	5	2,587 consultations conducted
2008 / 09	8	6	1,159 consultations conducted

Government audit finds mobile phone towers operate with big safety margins



The maximum level of RF emissions from the base station in Holt, ACT, was only 0.127% of the safety standard limit.

A federal health department audit of mobile phone base station sites across the country last year has found base station radio frequency (RF) exposures are well within the maximum safety standard limit set by the government.

A survey undertaken by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) shows exposure levels from antennas and base stations operated by Australia's telecommunications carriers are hundreds to thousands of times below the allowable limit.

Results from the latest survey of four sites in Queensland, the Northern Territory and ACT show the maximum level of RF emissions from these base stations (operating at full power) was just 0.890% of the ARPANSA safety standard

limit for public exposure. This level is more than 100 times below the safety standard.

The maximum measurements recorded were: 0.127% in Holt (ACT); 0.890% in Palmerston (NT); 0.052% in Wynnum North (QLD); and 0.051% in Calamvale (QLD).

These four sites were of particular interest because they were chosen for the number of antennas located on the one site. There were at least four, and as many as seven, different telecommunications services co-located and operating on the one site. It was expected that these sites would have higher exposure levels because of the relatively large number of services operating in the same location.

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Government audit finds mobile phone towers operate with big safety margins

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The maximum measurement recorded in Calamvale, QLD, was only 0.051% of the safety standard limit

“The testing managed by the Government clearly shows the significant margin of safety between the maximum power of a base station with multiple services operating at the same time and Australia’s safety standard limits,” MCF Program Manager Matt Evans said.

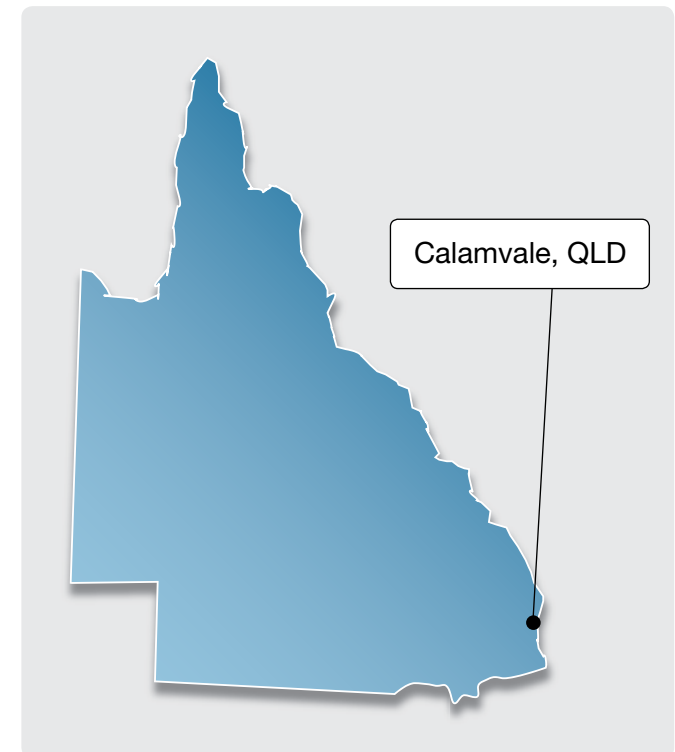
“We hope that people who have concerns about safety around base stations in other cities and towns around Australia can take some comfort from these results as they are clear and unambiguous.”

The highest level of emissions recorded across the 16 audited sites from 2007-2009 is still only 1.163 per cent or 86 times lower than the standard.

The survey was carried out by ARPANSA with financial support from the Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF).

Results from all the audited base station sites since 2007 can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

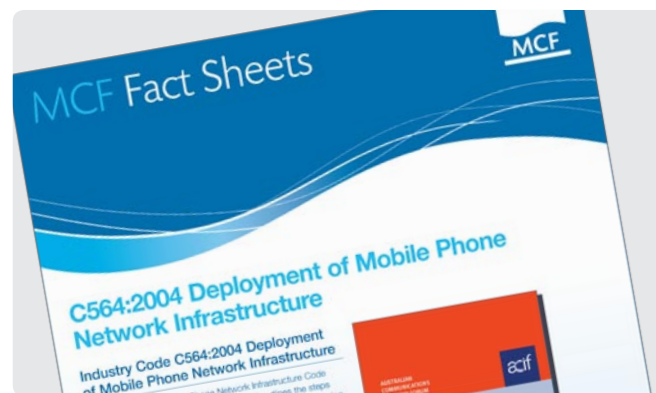


In Brief

ACIF Code review to take place this year

The first review of the industry code which Australia's mobile phone network carriers must adhere to when installing new mobile phone base stations will be conducted this year.

In response to community concerns the industry developed a code-of-practice, in conjunction with community representatives, which covers the siting of mobile phone base stations. It was designed to increase the transparency and accountability of carriers.



The code requires mobile phone carriers to inform local councils and notify communities more extensively when building new mobile phone base stations. This includes Low-Impact sites, such as panel antennas on road signs, building facades and roof tops, that have not previously required this level of community consultation by law.

The Communications Alliance, an organisation which represents the communications industry, is planning to conduct a review of ACIF Industry Code C564:2004 "Deployment of Mobile Phone Network Infrastructure" in April 2010 by calling for submissions.

The Code was registered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority on 7 April 2005 and according to section 8.4 of the Code, it should be reviewed five years after registration.

All Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) published documents are reviewed from time to time and the outcome of a review will be a decision to revise, reconfirm, or withdraw the published document. If a revision is

recommended, it can be a complete revision or one with limited terms of reference.

More information about the ACIF code for deployment can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

European safety authorities find no scientific evidence of adverse health effects

Five European safety authorities released a joint statement in November reassuring the public that there is no substantiated scientific evidence that mobile phone use or exposure to the emissions from base stations below internationally accepted levels pose a health risk.

Government safety officials from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland reviewed all the scientific evidence available on public exposure to mobile phone base stations and found there is no need for authorities to take any further action to reduce this exposure.

In brief

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“The Nordic authorities agree that there is no scientific evidence for adverse health effects caused by radiofrequency field strengths in the normal living environment at present. This conclusion concurs with the opinion of international scientific and advisory bodies... The Nordic authorities therefore at present see no need for a common recommendation for further actions to reduce these radiofrequency fields,” the five authorities state.

The joint Nordic statement can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

UK Government tests show Wi-Fi levels within guidelines

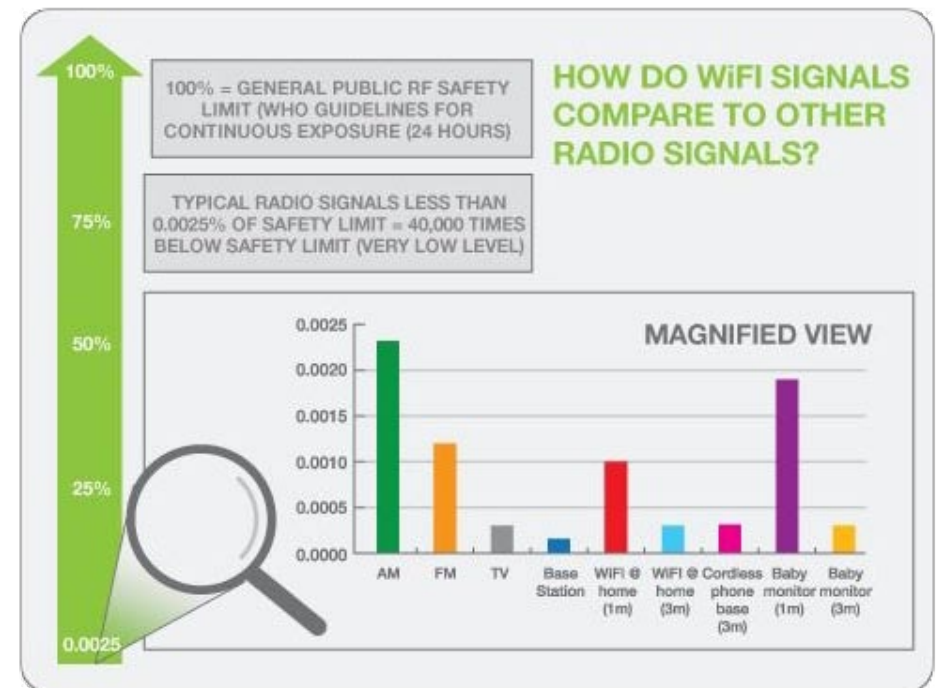
Recent test results from measurements of the radio waves generated by laptop computers using Wi-Fi networks have shown they are low powered and exposures are well within international safety guidelines, according to the UK Health Protection Agency (HPA).

Dr Simon Mann, head of the HPA’s physical dosimetry department, said the maximum emissions from Wi-Fi laptops were in the range 17 to 57 milliwatts (mW) and well within the 100 mW limit set by international safety guidelines.

“Our findings are consistent with the HPA position that exposures to the radio waves from Wi-Fi equipment are expected to be well within internationally-accepted exposure guidelines and less than levels from mobile phones,” Dr Mann said.

More information about the HPA’s Wi-Fi tests can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)



This chart, provided by emfexplained.info, shows EMF levels measured in a typical home as a % of the safety standard

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In brief

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No increase in brain cancer rates, despite huge growth in mobile ownership

The exponential increase in mobile phone use since the late 1990s has not caused an increase in brain cancer cases, according to one of the largest studies of its kind published in December.

The 30-year analysis of cancer cases reported amongst 16 million adults in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden found no related, observable change in the incidence of cases up until 2003.

“From 1974 to 2003, brain tumour incidence rates in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden were stable, decreased, or continued a gradual increase that started before the introduction of mobile phones. No change in incidence trends was observed from 1998 to 2003, the time when possible associations between mobile phone use and cancer risk would be informative about

an induction period of five to 10 years,” the researchers state.

“The observed patterns of brain tumor incidence are consistent with the results of a large Danish cohort study of mobile phone subscribers, which found no increased risk for brain tumors associated with mobile phone use. Our results are also in line with those of the Nordic and United Kingdom populations of the international INTERPHONE case – control study of brain tumors, which show no overall increase in glioma or meningioma risk, but leave open the possibility of a small to moderate increased risk for glioma among the heaviest users of mobile phones.”

The Scandinavian study can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Txt msgs soar over festive season

Australians have let their fingers do the talking over the Christmas and New Year festive



period with estimates for the number of text messages sent breaking all time records.

Telstra estimates 91 million SMS messages were sent over the three day holiday break at Christmas – up from 85 million the year before – while Optus says its customers sent 50 million SMS's, up from 39 million.

“Text messaging continues to grow in popularity and we’re expecting to topple last year’s record as Aussies across the country spread the Christmas cheer with their loved ones,” Telstra Consumer Executive Director, Jenny Young, said. Optus Consumer Managing Director Michael Smith said text message volumes on Christmas day tend to be more than three times that of a normal day.

“In recent years the mobile phone has become an integral part of the way we live our lives. More and more people now turn to their mobile to stay in touch with friends and family, keep up to date with the latest news and access entertainment,” Mr Smith said.