

mobile inSite

news, issues and science on mobile
telecommunications deployment

October 2008 – In this issue

- Editorial ■
- Government advises ALGA it will not change base station installation legislation ■
- Government audit finds base station emissions very low ■
- BioInitiative report biased and unscientific says health authorities ■
- 10,000 Australians seek mobile base station EME information ■
- MCF calls on NSW Education Department to drop buffer zone policy ■
- ACRBR conference hosts INTERPHONE lead author ■
- New information resource on wireless and health proves popular ■
- MCF pushing for regional planning reforms ■
- Everyday exposure to mobile emissions very low ■
- In brief ■

SUBSCRIBE

UNSUBSCRIBE

Editorial

Welcome to the October 2008 edition of Mobile InSite. The Mobile Carriers Forum is currently talking to state governments and councils about the rules regarding where mobile network carriers can locate network infrastructure.

These rules can be complex and ambiguous and sometimes have little regard for the need for base stations to be located close to where people expect service.

In this edition we review the progress of the MCF's Regional Program and its call for harmonised planning rules across councils and state governments for the deployment of network infrastructure.

Interestingly, a letter from Senator Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, has confirmed the

federal government's intentions on base station deployment legislation. We review the Minister's statement and its background.

For the second year, the Australian Centre for RF Bioeffects Research will hold its annual conference in November. This year's event "SW08 Wireless and Health – Unplugged and Uncertain" is headlined with a lead researcher from the highly anticipated INTERPHONE project. Mobile InSite provides details of the event and information on how you can apply for a \$500 travel award to attend this year's event.

Also in this edition are the results of an audit undertaken by the federal government of mobile phone base station emissions, a report issued by the Health Council of the Netherlands on the BioInitiative Report and a review of a new website on EME issues and health.



Matt Evans

Mobile Carriers Forum
Program Manager

Government advises ALGA it will not change base station installation legislation

Communications Minister Stephen Conroy has made it clear, in a letter to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), the government is not contemplating changes to the existing legislation for the installation of mobile phone base stations.

Unley Council passed a motion at the ALGA's national general assembly last November asking the federal government to give councils the power to determine the placement of telecommunication towers with final decisions to be made by development assessment panels.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The letter, dated May 14, says telecommunication facilities, such as mobile phone base stations, help provide access to essential services and



Senator Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

the Australian Government strongly supports the installation of such facilities and does not plan to introduce legislation to require telecommunications carriers to be subject to additional local government planning requirements.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

“When new infrastructure is installed the Government supports the application of sensible rules and guidelines by companies,” the Minister said.

The Minister referred the ALGA to existing state and territory planning laws and the industry code of practice that requires carriers to notify and consult with local communities when installing base stations.

Under the ACIF Code, a carrier must inform councils about all new base stations and councils are asked to comment on the carriers' plans to inform and consult with the local community.

Continued next page

Government advises ALGA it will not change base station installation legislation

Continued from previous page

“This consultation requirement ensures communities are well-informed of proposed activity and while carriers retain the final decision about construction for low-impact facilities, it promotes transparent decision-making and justification for such decisions,” MCF Program Manager Matt Evens said.

Industry recognises that some councillors are frustrated that they do not make the final decision on low-impact installations. However, these laws provide an appropriate balance between the needs of the vast majority of Australians who demand good mobile phone coverage and the views of concerned residents who would prefer not to see any of the required infrastructures in their neighbourhood, he said.

We have also established a national co-location taskforce to ensure that wherever possible



President of the
Australian Local
Government
Association Councillor
Paul Bell

additional mobile phone base stations are located on existing facilities, Mr Evens said.

“Our experience is that most communities would prefer the use of existing infrastructure wherever possible rather than the installation of new stand-alone base stations or towers,” he said.

The ALGA also called for the Federal Government to undertake a health and safety audit of the Australian telecommunications network.

In response the Minister directed the ALGA to the ongoing work of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), which sets public health standards for exposure to electromagnetic emissions and tests base stations to ensure they comply with these safety limits.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

“ARPANSA advises that the exposure limits in its standards are set well below the level at which adverse health effects are known to occur,” the Minister said.

Government audit finds base station emissions very low



A Federal Health Department audit of nine mobile phone base station sites across the country during 2007-08 has found base station radio frequency (RF) exposures are well within Australia's safety standards.

A measurement program 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.

The survey revealed some sites, even those expected to have the highest levels, emit less than 0.001 per cent of the safety standard, or 100,000 times below the standard.

The highest level of RF recorded during the project was still only 1.163 per cent of the standard.

Results from ARPANSA's 2007-08 base station survey can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The project, funded in part by the Mobile Carriers Forum, was conducted independently by ARPANSA and included independently selected sites with measurements taken in public areas expected to have the highest exposure levels.

As part of the site selection process, members of the public and councils were given the opportunity to nominate sites they felt concerned about. The EME Reference Group, a committee that includes representatives from consumer organisations, government, the health sector and community groups, were also given the opportunity to nominate sites.

Continued next page

Government audit finds base station emissions very low

Continued from previous page

Three sites in New South Wales, two in South Australia, two in West Australia and one each in Victoria and Queensland were chosen for the survey.

ARPANSA measured actual RF energy levels around the base stations at five separate locations. These measurements were then compared to the predicted levels provided by mobile phone carriers when proposing to install the base stations.

“For all 9 base stations, the maximum full power exposure level and the maximum level actually measured were less than the predicted levels given in the EME report published by the relevant mobile phone company,” Dr Lindsay Martin, manager of the Electromagnetic Radiation Section of ARPANSA said.

“The maximum levels obtained by ARPANSA for the 9 base stations ranged from less than 0.001% (1/100,000) to 1.16%. The maximum



A survey site with the measurement device in the foreground and base station in the background

levels actually measured ranged from less than 0.001% to 0.27%. Average levels in the area were considerably lower still.

“The results provide assurance that levels are very much less than Australian standards and that the EME reports provide a useful and practical upper limit on ground level exposures,” Dr Martin said.

City Beach West Australia

For example, the results collected at the City Beach base station site in West Australia show the maximum level of RF exposure around this site was 0.303 per cent of the ARPANSA standard.

The highest combined exposure from all RF emissions from nearby base stations at a point 220 metres from the City Beach base station was 0.042 per cent of the standard.

The prediction of levels provided by the network carriers for the City Beach site was 1.89 per cent of the standard.

Full results for the City Beach site survey can be found at:

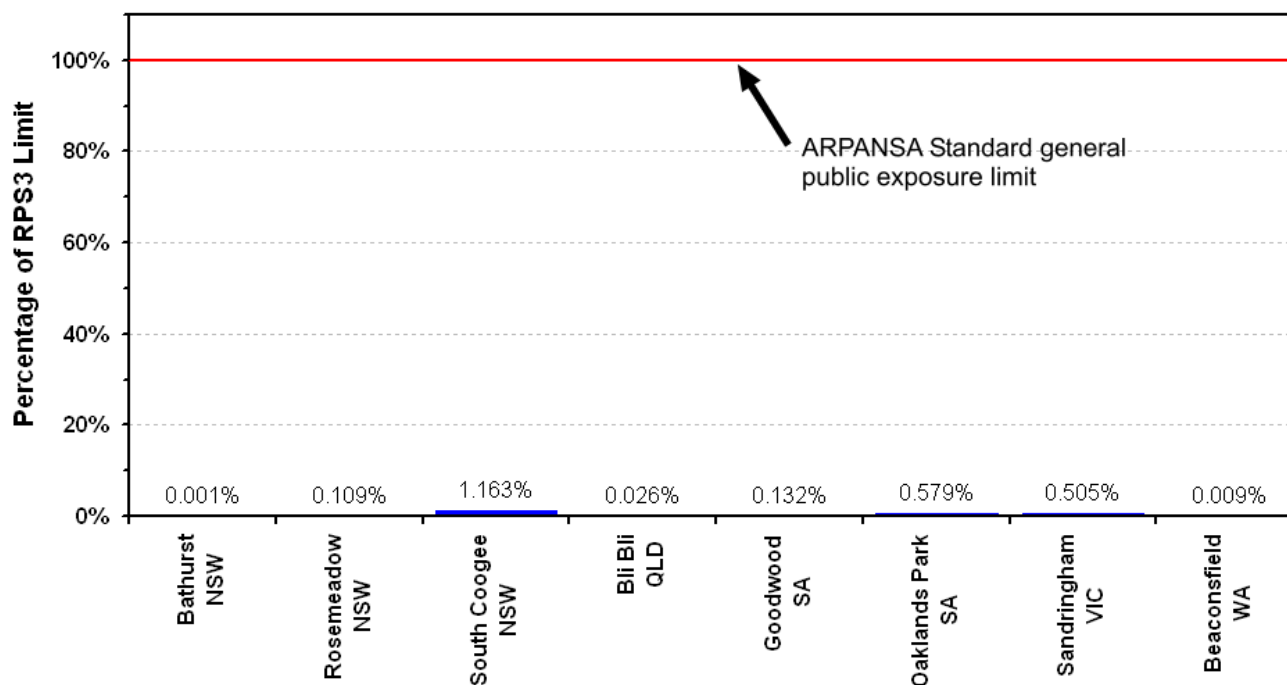
[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Continued next page

Government audit finds base station emissions very low

Continued from previous page

Summary Results and ARPANSA Standard limit



Previous Survey Results

Results from a 2005 audit by ARPANSA of 60 mobile phone base stations across the country also found exposure levels were well below Australia's safety standard limits.

The measurements showed on average the exposure level was 0.021 per cent of the Australian safety standard in locations where the levels were expected to be at their highest. The highest recorded level during this survey from a single base station was only 0.2 per cent of the standard.

A report from ARPANSA about the 2005 audit in the scientific journal *Bioelectromagnetics* can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Continued next page

Government audit finds base station emissions very low

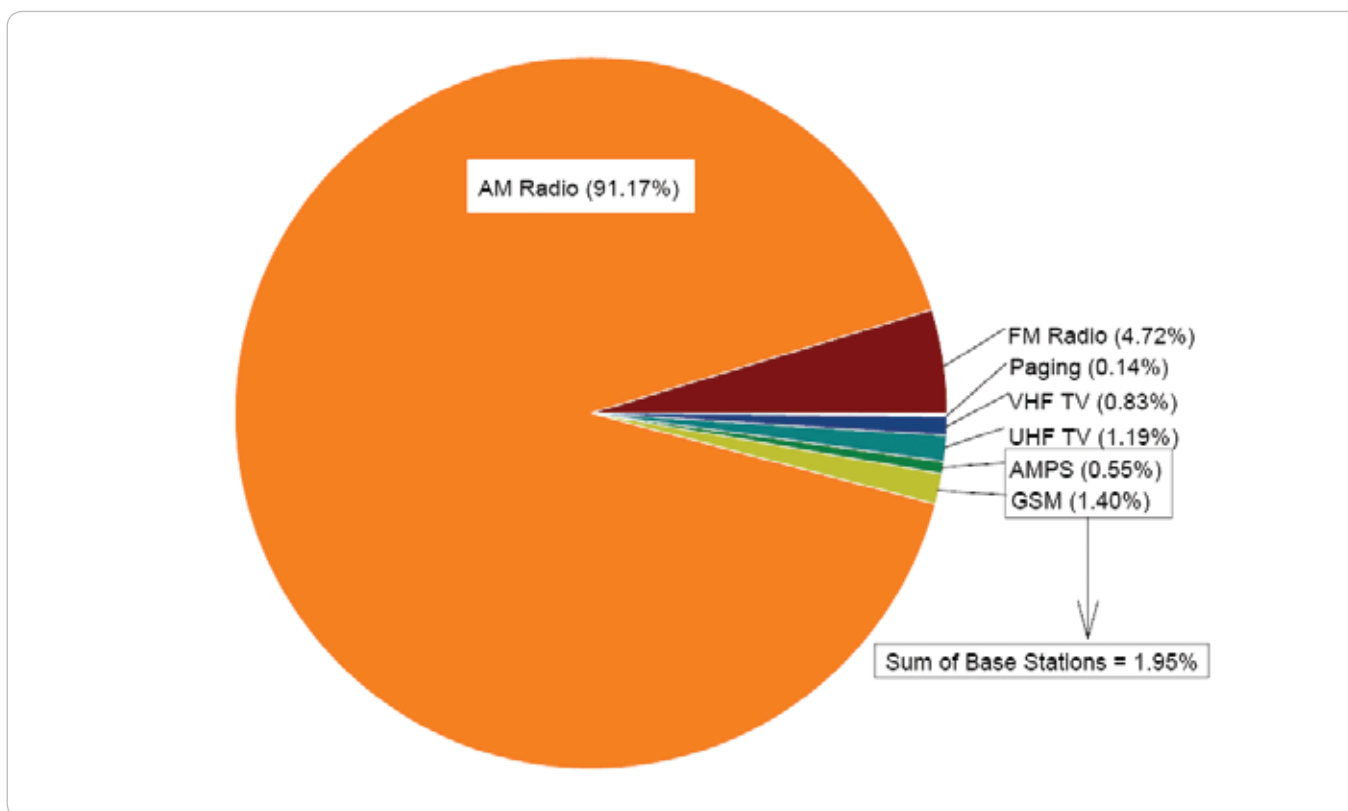
Continued from previous page

Another nationwide study published in 2000 by ARPANSA found the average exposure level from the selected sites was 100,000 times less than the level permitted by Australia's former safety standard. The worst case scenario in the 2000 survey was still 1000 times less.

Interestingly, the 2000 audit also examined other sources of man-made RF signals. The survey found that AM radio was by far the most significant contributor of radio frequency emissions to the community's overall environmental exposure (91.17%). FM radio contributed 4.72% while television broadcasts contributed 2.02%. Digital mobile phone base stations contributed only a small part of environmental levels (1.4%).

Results from ARPANSA's 2000 audit can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)



BioInitiative report biased and unscientific says health authorities

Independent health authorities have recently reviewed the BioInitiative report and have concluded the report is biased and unscientific.

The report titled *BioInitiative: A Rationale for a Biologically-Based Public Exposure Standard for Electromagnetic Fields* was published on the internet late last year and claimed existing public safety standards governing the level of radiation emitted by mobile phones, power lines, Wi-Fi networks and other electrical devices were inadequate.

WEBSITE LINK

The report was compiled by a group of self selected scientists from the US, Sweden, Britain, China and Denmark and claimed prolonged



Vice President of the Health Council of the Netherlands and author of the statement
Professor Marianne De Visser

exposure to radio frequency and microwave radiation from mobile phones, base stations and Wi-Fi networks could be linked to symptoms such as headaches, dizziness and changes in brainwave activity.

The report argued health effects at biological levels are widely reported below the levels of existing safety limits and new safety standards should be developed taking into account these 'bioeffects' as a precautionary measure.

However the Health Council of the Netherlands' Electromagnetic Fields Committee reviewed the BioInitiative report recently and concluded it is a selective review of existing research and does not present a balanced analysis considering the relative scientific quality of different studies.

WEBSITE LINK

Some of the many shortcomings identified included that the report made claims which lacked scientific basis and false claims.

For example, the BioInitiative report claimed:

"It appears it is the information conveyed by electromagnetic radiation (rather than heat) that causes biological changes."

Continued next page

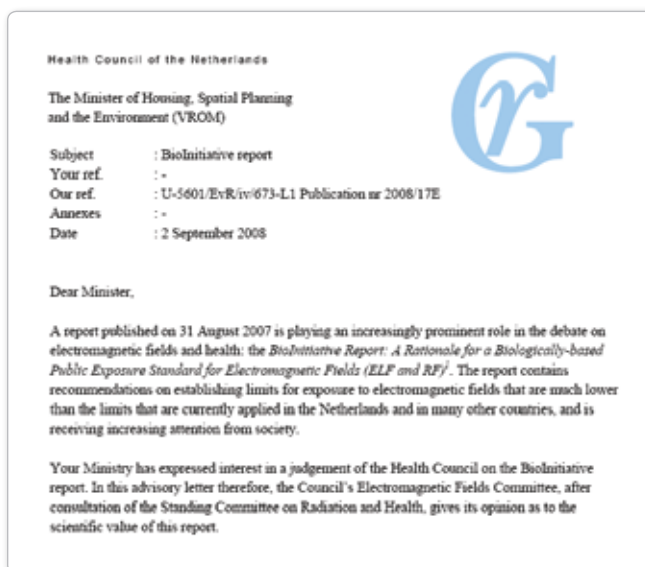
BioInitiative report biased and unscientific says health authorities

Continued from previous page

However, the health council strongly disagreed:

“This statement lacks a scientific basis and is, according to the Committee, incorrect. First of all no information is being transferred by low frequency fields and heating does not occur. With radiofrequency fields, information is being transferred by modulation. Some experimental studies found indications that certain biological effects may occur upon exposure to a modulated signal, but not, or to a lesser extent, with exposure to an unmodulated signal. As yet, there is no sufficient scientific evidence to confirm this. It is not known whether such effects may lead to health effects. The suggestion that some of the observed biological effects may lead to reduced wellbeing, disease, or even death lacks scientific basis.”

“In view of the way the BioInitiative report was compiled, the selective use of scientific data and



the other shortcomings mentioned above, the Committee concludes that the BioInitiative report is not an objective and balanced reflection of the current state of scientific knowledge,” the council concluded.

Other reviews

Danish National Board of Health said:

The BioInitiative report a) does not provide any reason to change the current health risk assessment on exposure to electromagnetic fields and b) does not include new data and has not taken the scientific quality of the cited reports into consideration in the way that is customary.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

(in Danish)

The German Federal Office for Radiation Protection said (in German):

The BioInitiative report has clear scientific weaknesses including selection bias in several research areas.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

(in German)

10,000 Australians seek mobile base station EME information

More than ten thousand Australians have sought and obtained specific information regarding electromagnetic energy (EME) levels around base stations over the past 12 months from the mobile phone industry's online directory of base stations in Australia.

The Mobile Carriers Forum's (MCF) Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA) provides a listing of approximately 15,000 mobile base station facilities built or upgraded since April 2003. Some facilities erected before 2003 are yet to be added to the archive.

In the 2007-08 financial year, 10,108 EME environmental reports were downloaded providing information regarding the maximum EME level likely to be encountered in the neighbourhood of a mobile phone base station antenna. These

Continued next page

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA). At the top, there is a header with the MCF logo and the title "Radio Frequency National Site Archive". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Logout", "Sites", "Search", and "Help". On the right side of the header, there is a "Quick Search:" field with a "Go" button. The main content area features a "Welcome to the RFNSA" section with a paragraph explaining the site's purpose and a paragraph detailing the types of facilities listed. Below this, there are two side-by-side boxes: "Location of Base Station Facilities" and "Environmental EME Reports".

Radio Frequency National Site Archive

Logout Sites Search Help Quick Search: Go

Welcome to the RFNSA

This site is an internet archive of mobile telephone base stations and radio communication facilities in Australia. The RFNSA was launched in April 2003 in conjunction with the new ACIF Code - Deployment of Radio Communications Infrastructure.

The RFNSA provides a listing of all new mobile telephone base station facilities built or upgraded since April 2003. Over time the RFNSA will provide a listing of all the mobile telephone base stations in Australia.

Location of Base Station Facilities

Use "Quick Search" in the top menu to locate base stations.
Search by site number, site name, suburb or postcode.

Search the [ACMA Database](#) for sites not yet in the RFNSA.

Environmental EME Reports

An environmental EME prediction report is available for each base station.

Look at the "Reports" tab on each site.

(Note: some reports may still be in preparation)

10,000 Australians seek mobile base station EME information

Continued from previous page

levels are typically many hundreds of times below Australia's EME Safety Standard.

More information about EME Environmental Reports can be found at:

WEBSITE LINK

Also in this period, 1,241 visitors were able to confirm a mobile network carrier's compliance with Australia's EME standards through downloading a site compliance certificate. The certificate is produced to verify the base station site meets the requirements of EME Safety standards.

The RFNSA directory was developed by the MCF in 2001 following community requests for easy to access information on base station emission levels.

Using a guest login, anyone with access to the internet can search for EME information for proposed or upgraded mobile network facilities in their local area. Searches can be conducted by site name, suburb or postcode.

Seven steps for locating a mobile telecommunications facility

The MCF has developed seven steps to help anyone interested in locating a telecommunications facility, its EME Environmental Report or Site Compliance Certificate:

- 1 Go to the RFNSA using this web address: <http://www.rfnsa.com.au/nsa/index.cgi> or [click here](#).

WEBSITE LINK

- 2 Press the Guest Login Button.
- 3 Search by typing the site name, suburb or post code into the search box in the top right hand corner.
- 4 Select the site you are looking for from the search results.
- 5 Click on the 'Reports' tab.
- 6 Click on the 'Environmental EME Report' and open.
- 7 The table of predicted/existing EME levels within the report shows levels (as a percentage of Australia's Radiation Protection Standard) from the telecommunications facility.

MCF calls on NSW Education Department to drop buffer zone policy

The Mobile Carriers Forum met with the NSW Department of Education recently to discuss the Department's buffer zone policy which the MCF says is fundamentally flawed because mobile phone networks could not operate if it was applied.

Since 1997 the Department's policy has required a 500m buffer zone between schools and proposed mobile phone base stations.

MCF Program Manager Matt Evans told Departmental representatives that the Policy has no regard for the way mobile network facilities operated.

"A buffer zone between schools and mobile phone towers is fundamentally flawed. Buffer zone policies are 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," he said.

'The Policy is not being applied uniformly and we note that the Department has not ruled out building schools within 500m of existing mobile network facilities.'

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, he explained.

"The further a base station is built from a school for instance, the base station will need to operate at a higher power which could actually increase exposures at the school – the very thing exclusion zone policies are trying to avoid."

Furthermore, buffer zones can severely restrict community development and could create

reception black spots or network congestion, which would deny Australians access to the safety, business and personal benefits of mobile communications, he said.

For example, if the policy was applied around all schools then at least 58 percent of the Willoughby Council area, 83 percent of Leichhardt Council area and 60 percent of the built up area of the Sutherland Shire would have no mobile network coverage at all.

"The Policy is not being applied uniformly and we note that the Department has not ruled out building schools within 500m of existing mobile network facilities. The Policy is 11 years old, flawed and should be withdrawn," said Mr Evans.

Over the past 12 months, the MCF has identified a number of cases where the Department's policy has been highlighted in supporting written

Continued next page

MCF calls on NSW Education Department to drop buffer zone policy

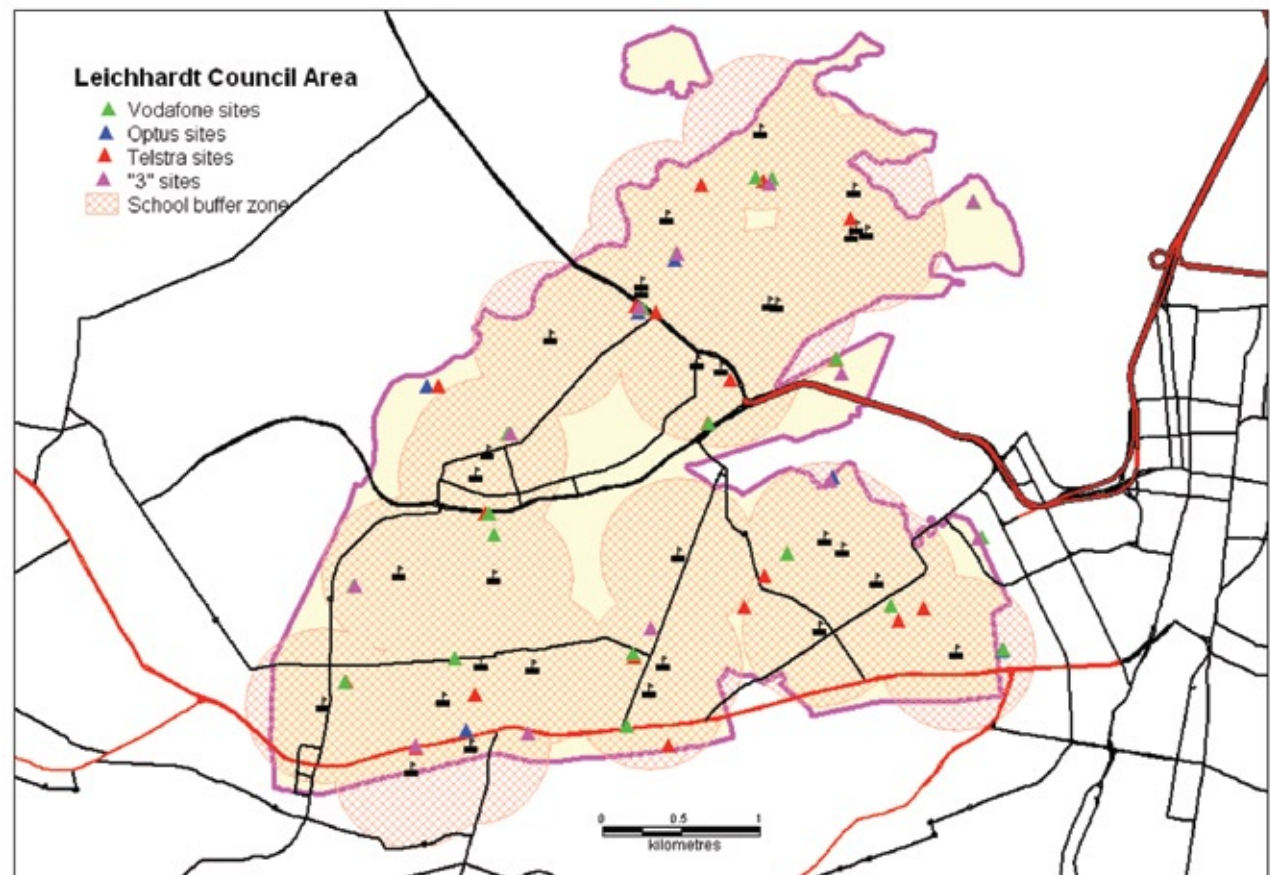
Continued from previous page

objections to proposed mobile network base stations, citing their proximity to schools, health concerns and the Department's policy.

The MCF advised the Department that just as schools are located close to the residential communities to service the educational needs, so too are mobile network facilities, which seek to address the telecommunications needs of the same community.

Today's educational environment is more reliant than ever on interactive applications where students, teachers and administrators can access the internet via Wi-Fi and wireless broadband services.

The increasing demands to improve the quality of education in NSW will necessitate greater levels of accessibility to wireless technologies. This objective will be frustrated if reliable, high quality services are unavailable due to incompatible policies within the Department.



Leichhardt Council area map showing 83 percent of the municipality would have no mobile coverage under the Policy – Graphic provided by Telstra

ACRBR conference hosts INTERPHONE lead author

Melbourne's Swinburne University will host one of the world's leading researchers on mobile phone health effects when it stages a conference on the potential health risks of wireless technology in November.

The Australian Centre for RF Bioeffects Research (ACRBR), based at Swinburne's Hawthorn campus, will hold its annual conference on 12 November with one of the lead researchers of the highly anticipated INTERPHONE project presenting at the event.

Professor Bruce Armstrong from the University of Sydney and lead author of the Australian portion of the INTERPHONE project, will give an exclusive key note presentation to the ACRBR audience on mobile phones and cancer risk including the status of the INTERPHONE project.



Lead author of the Australian INTERPHONE project
Professor Bruce Armstrong

The conference, titled *Wireless and Health – Unplugged and Uncertain?*, will be the first time an INTERPHONE researcher has presented results from the project to an Australian audience.

ACRBR's SW08 Wireless and Health – Unplugged and Uncertain program of events can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The conference boasts an impressive panel of scientists to discuss wireless health issues. Apart from Professor Armstrong, the panel also includes ACRBR's executive director Professor Rodney Croft, manager of the electromagnetic radiation section of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency Dr Lindsay Martin, Monash University occupational and environmental epidemiologist Dr Geza Benke, occupational and environmental medicine specialist Dr David Black and risk communication specialist Dr Ray Kemp.

The panel discussion session provides members of the public with a unique opportunity to ask questions of the panel about any issues that may be concerning them.

Continued next page

ACRBR conference hosts INTERPHONE lead author

Continued from previous page



ACRBR's executive director
Professor Rodney Croft

After the panel discussion, ACRBR will release the results of its home measurement study, which will reveal the sources and levels of radio frequency in an average home.

Displays and live experiments will also be conducted, including an investigation of whether mobile phones can cook popcorn.

In upholding its commitment to being the leading research organisation on radiofrequency bioeffects, ACRBR is offering four national travel awards of \$500 each for community members to attend the Science & Wireless conference.

The awards are intended to assist in travel costs for members of the public interested in the ongoing debate on the safety of wireless

communications devices, but who may not otherwise be able to afford to travel to attend the forum.

To apply for a \$500 travel award to attend ACRBR's Science and Wireless conference, click here:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

New information resource on wireless and health proves popular

A new website www.emfexplained.info launched in July by the mobile phone industry to help people interested in a better understanding of radio frequency electromagnetic fields (EMF) and wireless issues has proved very popular.

After only one month in operation the site registered more than 5000 page visits from users in more than 50 countries including Australia, UK, USA, Germany, Egypt, India and Brazil.

The EMF Explained Series (emfexplained.info) provides up-to-date, easy-to-access layered

information on the scientific consensus among leading public health and regulatory authorities from around the world on health and EMF.

The site took more than 10 months to develop and involved research, collaboration and input from representatives across the globe.

So far the most popular pages on the site include the Mobile Myths section which provides scientific reasoning debunking the hoax that mobile phones can cook eggs and popcorn.

Information on emfexplained.info is referenced from leading international health authorities,

EMF Explained Series



New information resource on wireless and health proves popular

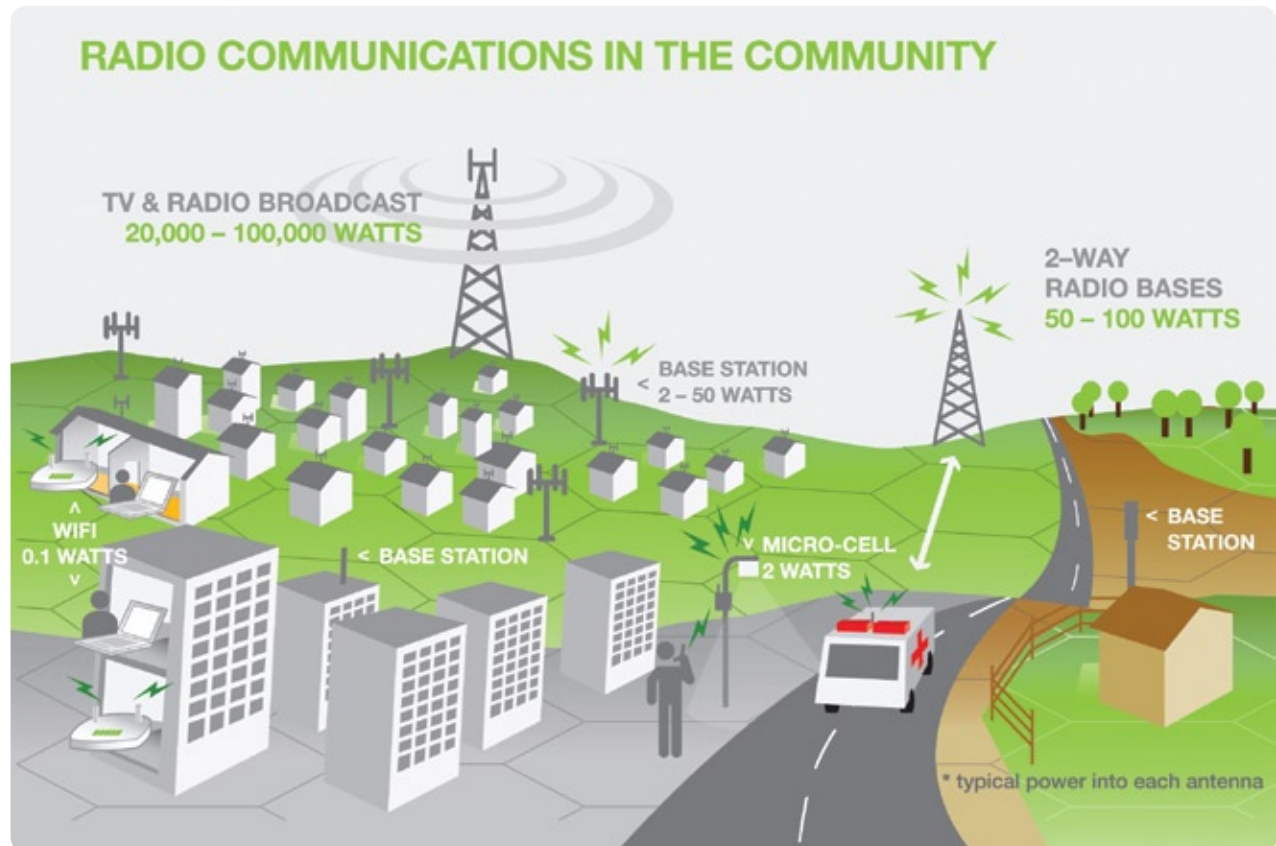
Continued from previous page

such as the World Health Organisation, for assessments of safety and health impacts of EMF and wireless issues. The mobile phone industry relies on such independent experts and complies with internationally-recognised safety standards.

The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA), the peak industry body representing the mobile telecommunications industry in Australia, developed the site in conjunction with two leading international industry associations, the GSM Association and the Mobile Manufacturers Forum.

The EMF Explained Series can be viewed at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)



MCF pushing for regional planning reforms

The Mobile Carriers Forum is working with state governments through its Regional Program to initiate state wide planning reform of defunct policy on wireless network deployment.

The program aims to ensure that local councils don't apply their own local policies which are more often than not fundamentally flawed and lead to poorer planning outcomes in terms of the siting and design of mobile network infrastructure.

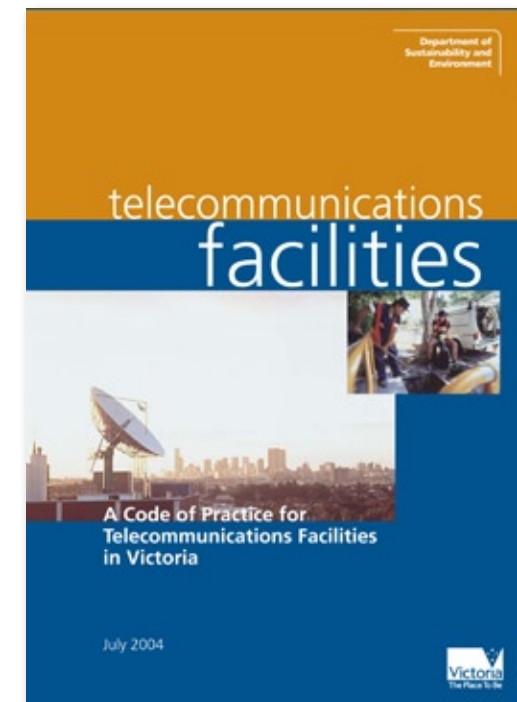
The regulatory arrangement that exists in Victoria is being used as the suggested model for other states to adopt. In 1999 Victoria developed its policy and introduced new state wide

planning policies to guide the assessment of telecommunications infrastructure.

The MCF has been pursuing state wide guidance and uniform planning controls in New South Wales since 2001. The NSW Department of Planning is now considering the MCF's proposition that a state-wide Telecommunications Code should be developed for NSW following the Victorian model.

The adoption of a standard code would provide a significant opportunity to reduce timeframes, cost and complexity when the carriers are securing development approval for mobile network infrastructure in NSW.

Continued next page



MCF pushing for regional planning reforms

Continued from previous page



In Western Australia the MCF met with the WA Department of Planning and Infrastructure Deputy Director General in May to seek changes to state planning policy to prohibit the introduction of 'buffer zones' or specific development setback requirements for mobile phone facilities. The department has agreed to consider altering state planning controls to include an amendment to the existing state planning policy guiding the way councils assess proposed telecommunications facilities.

Since 2005, the Queensland MCF has been actively participating in the development of a State Assessment Code for Telecommunications Infrastructure. It was anticipated that the code would be formalised and incorporated into

the revision of the Integrated Planning Act in September 2007. However, this has been delayed due to council amalgamations and other planning reforms of greater priority for the state government.

In Tasmania, the state government has signed a memorandum of understanding with councils in the north east region which marks the first step towards achieving regionally based and consistent planning schemes. Consistent with its regional program objectives, the MCF has made representations to the Tasmanian Department of Justice in support of the move towards consistent provisions and increased exemptions for telecommunications infrastructure in standardised planning controls.

Everyday exposure to mobile emissions very low

Everyday exposure to the emissions from mobile phones and their base stations are so low that devices specifically designed to measure their intensities have difficulty registering a recording, according to a new study by the Hungarian National Research Institute for Radiobiology and Radiohygiene.

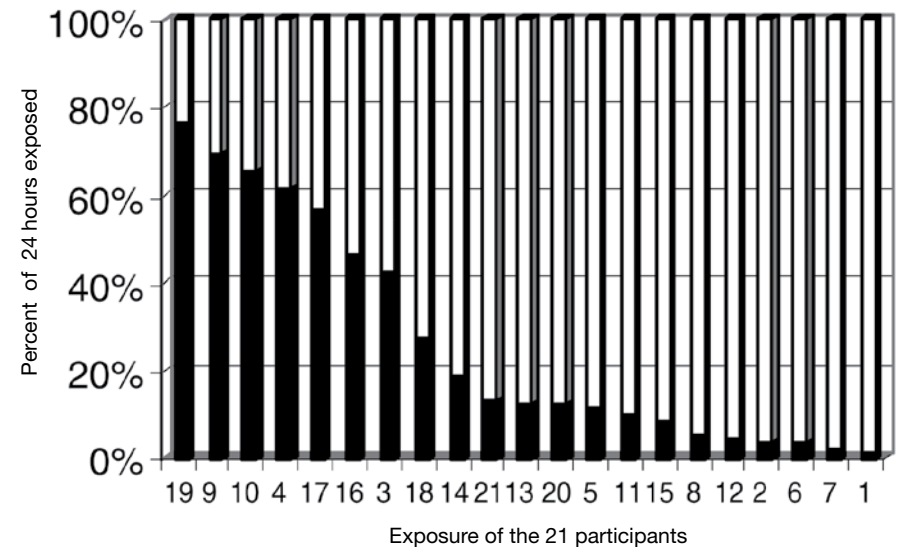
After equipping 21 participants for 24 hours with a personal exposure metre (PEM) to measure the amount of time in, the strength and type of the emission they were exposed to, the authors found the participants were exposed to a very little amount of radiofrequency (RF) energy.

“Participants spent small fraction of the total measuring time above the detection limit of the meter in average,” the authors report.

Important Notes

- The measurement sensitivity for the exposure metres starts at 0.05 V/m
- Dark shading represents percent of time spent above the detection limit – the white area represents exposure at 0.05 V/m or below.
- The highest average exposure for all channels during the 24 hours was 0.119 V/m
- The Australian safety standard is set between 27 and 61 V/m

□ E=0.05 V/m
 ■ E>0.05 V/m



Most of the time the 21 participants were exposed below the measurement sensitivity limit of the personal exposure metres (white area). Those exposed above the detection limit (dark area) are still well below international safety limits.

Continued next page

Everyday exposure to mobile emissions very low

Continued from previous page

“Half of the subjects spent less than 10%, and only one third of the participants spent 40–70% of 24-h recording time in RF fields above the detection limit of the PEM.”

The report also notes that the strongest intensity and longest exposure on average the participants experienced during the 24 hour period was from FM radio sources.

“The highest exposure resulted from FM sources,” lead author professor Gyorgy Thuroczy reported. “In the present study, we found that the longest exposure time over the detection level of the PEM device occurred from the FM broadcast channels.”

Despite FM radio transmitters emitting the strongest source of RF, the study found that all



the channels measured (which included radio, television, mobile phones and base stations) were very low and well within international safety guidelines.

“Average field intensities for the total 24-h measuring period in all channels were very low.

The range was between 0.05 and 0.119 V/m,” the report states.

The participants’ highest exposure for any channel was detected during times when they were travelling, while their lowest exposure was detected while they were at home in bed.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the usefulness of an RF personal exposure metre for assessing individual RF exposures in an urban environment. The authors report that such metres do prove useful and provide more accuracy than other methods of measurement.

The study can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

In brief

Table 4.8: Call origin by service type for calls to 000 and 112, 2002-03 to 2006-07

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Facsimile	129,948	192,054	49,328	27,741	31,626
Payphone	847,295	782,767	526,521	555,624	540,120
Other fixed	4,587,111	4,531,340	3,292,050	3,620,865	3,936,864
Mobile	5,768,344	7,262,227	6,912,810	7,274,901	7,547,031
Total	11,332,698	12,768,388	10,780,709	11,479,131	12,055,641

Source: Emergency call person (Telstra)

Australians rely on mobile phones in emergencies

Mobile phones now account for almost two thirds of all calls to emergency services in Australia, new figures released in April by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) show.

According to ACMA's Communications Report for 2006-07, calls from mobile phones to emergency services increased by 11.3 per cent over the last five years, with 62.2 per cent of all calls

made to the emergency number during 2006-07 originating from a mobile phone.

The report showed mobile phones accounted for the largest number of calls to emergency services since 2002, with more than 7.5 million mobile phone calls made to '000' and '112' in 2006-07.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority's 2006-07 Communications Report can be found at:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Another highlight in the ACMA report was the surpassing of 100 per cent penetration rate of mobile services in Australia. There is now more than one mobile service for every Australian, with 21.26 million mobile phone services in operation at 30 June 2007, a 7.6 per cent increase from 19.76 million the year before.

Mobile popcorn video shown to be a viral marketing hoax

Apparently home-made videos appearing to show corn being popped by the heat given off by ringing mobile phones which appeared on *YouTube* have been shown to be a hoax.

Some early versions of the video – several were posted in different languages at roughly the same time – were watched millions of times across the internet and generated hundreds of comments.

Continued next page

In brief

Continued from previous page

Despite the scientific impossibility of the stunt – mobile phones do not produce anywhere near enough heat to cook popcorn – some *YouTube* commenters appear convinced that the clips provided evidence of the dangers of technology.

But like a number of recent ‘unbelievable’ videos appearing on *YouTube* the popcorn footage has been shown to be a viral advertisement designed to flabbergast the public.

Eventually, Cardo Systems, a Pittsburgh-based manufacturer of wireless Bluetooth headsets, acknowledged it was responsible for the hoax – and they were proud they had deceived consumers.

“We wanted to generate more buzz about Cardo Systems,” Kathryn Rhodes, Cardo’s national marketing director, said in a newspaper interview “We found it tremendously successful.”



Their website also proudly displays the viral campaign assessment by the media.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

The advertisement was then released along with the sales pitch for their products.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Later Cardo explained how the hoax videos were made using digital editing in a *CNN* interview.

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Urban myth websites have also caught up with the hoax

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

And just in case you’re still not convinced, there is a version pointing out the dangers of bananas:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Continued next page

In brief

Continued from previous page

INTERPHONE project update

The final publication of the combined results of the highly anticipated INTERPHONE project appears set to be delayed even further, according to recent media reports.

An article published in the *Economic Times* on 27 September reported a draft of the final results was circulated to all the individual country authors involved in the project in June.

Despite this, the group has still not submitted a paper to a journal for peer-review.

According to an unidentified source for the paper, the INTERPHONE researchers are split into three groups. One group believes any increased incidence of tumours shown in the study is purely the result of recall and selection biases. Another thinks INTERPHONE really has found increased risks of certain tumours and wants to call for precautionary measures. A third group is just keeping quiet.



The article describes the relations between members of the three groups as “strained”.

However, the lead author of the Australian INTERPHONE study, Professor Bruce Armstrong, was quoted on 28 September in Melbourne’s *Sunday Age* regarding his opinion on the safety of mobile phone use.

“...there’s no evidence of any substantial trend to an increase in risk of brain tumours in younger people in Australia.”

Also, in New Zealand’s *Dominion Post*, Prof Armstrong said:

“There really isn’t any clear mechanism whereby mobile phone energy can cause cancer,” he says. “They have been around now for 10 to 15 years ... It would be likely that if something was going on and it was big, we would be seeing it. I don’t think we’re seeing it at the moment.”

More information on INTERPHONE can be found on the International Agency for Research on Cancer’s website:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

AMTA produced a special edition of *EME Update* which covered the INTERPHONE project:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

EMF Explained also provides an easy to understand overview of the INTERPHONE project:

[WEBSITE LINK](#)