

30 March 2012



The Senate Standing Committee on  
Environment and Communications  
PO Box 6100  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Amendment (Mobile Phone Towers Bill) 2011

Most people we speak to are unaware that the radiation emanating from what are now 'normal' household & workplace appliances and telecommunication devices is high frequency microwave/radio frequency radiation. In our homes and our work environment we are now encouraged to use wireless devices 24 hours a day, in the form of cordless and mobile phones, WIFI boxes for computer networks, and IQs and T-boxes. And we are bombarded with multiple television and radio channels, radiation from multiple mobile phone towers, speed cameras, police radar, and GPS . Yet we are not told of the potential issues for us in relation to our physical health and wellbeing.

When microwave ovens became available in the 1980s we were all advised of the need to monitor the ovens for leakage and to ensure the door was not damaged. There is a good reason why microwave ovens must be fully closed before they will operate and the door is shielded with a metal grid embedded in the glass – and that is that microwave radiation is bad for us. However, by introducing to our homes and work environment the joys and convenience of wireless technology in the form of WIFI boxes, T-boxes, IQs and Smartmeters, and radio frequency technology in the form of mobile and cordless phones, digital TV and GPS, we are metaphorically operating our microwave with the door open, 24 hours a day.

Electromagnetic radiation affects all living organisms. That is because all living things are electromagnetic beings right down to the cellular level. As electromagnetic beings we interact, interfere, and are interfered with by our environment. We humans cope with some level of radiation because we have evolved with a background of radiation from our planet and celestial bodies around us. However, over the last 60 years we have substantially increased our own background radiation levels, not only from atomic testing, but with the unthinking and untested take-up of these new technologies.

The interference our bodies experience due to radiation exposure can result in headaches, nausea, anxiety, cardiac arrhythmia, fatigue, sleep disturbance, inability to concentrate, irritability and in some cases skin rashes (including scaling and blistering) and interference with coordination. We all know that **very high** frequency radiation kills cancer cells and causes radiation sickness. However we are unaware of the dangers of **high** frequency radiation.

Enclosed is a recent paper published in the International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health entitled 'Epidemiological Evidence for a Health Risk from Mobile Phone Base Stations'. The lead author, Dr Vini Khurana, is a neurosurgeon and researcher based at the Canberra Hospital and the ANU Medical School. Dr Khurana is concerned because of his own observations of the increasing brain cancer rate, which he relates to long-term mobile phone use. This paper examines 10 studies conducted in Europe where 8 reported "increased prevalence of adverse neurobehavioural symptoms or cancer in populations living at distances >500 metres from base stations." None of the studies reported exposure above accepted international guidelines, suggesting that current guidelines may be inadequate in protecting the health of human populations. If you look at the list of reviewed studies on page 3 you will see that some studies are 7 years old. The reference list at the end of the paper lists 26 other papers. This list is just a drop in the ocean.

In 2007 an international group of scientists formed the Bioinitiative Working Group and released the Bioinitiative Report detailing scientific information on health impacts when people were exposed to electromagnetic radiation hundreds or even thousands of times below limits currently established by the FCC (Federal Communication Commission) in the US and the ICNIRP (International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) in Europe. The Working Group reviewed 2000 scientific studies and reviews and concluded that; "the existing public safety limits are inadequate to protect public health; and from a public health policy standpoint, new public safety limits and limits on further deployment of risky technologies are warranted based on the total weight of evidence.". They recommended that a precautionary limit be used to set allowable exposures at a level which is much, much lower than is currently allowed.

The World Health Organisation upgraded its classification of mobile phones to Category 2A (possibly carcinogenic) in 2011. See <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs193/en/>

Why is this being ignored? Why are the people who suffer life-threatening health effects (cancer) and functional effects (headache, nausea etc) being ignored? Are these people, metaphorically, the canaries in the coalmine?

The simple answer to the question of why the research and the plight of sufferers are ignored centres around money. The telecommunications industry is so lucrative that we are not being told by our Governments and our telecommunication companies that there is a potential problem. However, we are told that, buried in Telstra's annual reports, is the simple fact that Telstra is unable to get insurance for future health-issue liability related to its telecommunication network. The insurance industry suspects the truth, yet we continue to be



pushed to accept more and more devices and higher radiation exposure than it appears we should.

The telecommunication companies of the world have the support of governments, who set the allowable exposure limits and legislate (as in Australia with the Telecommunications Act) the right of companies to put a base station wherever they wish as long as it meets allowable exposure levels. These base stations operate continuously and can be found near or on shops, shopping centres, universities, hospitals, office buildings, apartment blocks, schools, day-care centres and even in church spires. The allowable exposure limits are high, much higher than the precautionary level recommended by the Bioinitiative Working Group. Those businesses, organisations, and body corporates who allow the installation of transmitters on their buildings receive rent of between \$10,000 and \$1,000,000 (depending on location/number of carriers/and number of transmitters) per annum for the privilege. It's obvious why it is attractive.

You are probably wondering why I, in particular, am writing to you about this issue. It is because David and I are both canaries in this particular coalmine. David was diagnosed with Electrohypersensitivity (basically a hyper-sensitivity to electro-magnetic radiation) in the 1990s by a sympathetic GP in Hobart. I was diagnosed with a sensitivity to radiation after I had radiation for breast cancer in 2005. For both of us it is torture to live, with our fellow humans, in an urban environment. We have a lovely home in East Melbourne, a quiet suburb close to the CBD. However, this house is in the 'grid' of 91 separate base station transmitters and 492 are close-by in the CBD of Melbourne. We can see a few of those sculpturally imposing large city roof-top installations from our windows. We can also receive between 14 and 15 of our neighbour's WIFI signals every day, 24 hours a day through the walls of our terrace house .

A handy reference tool at this point is the Australian Communications and Media Authority website at [http://web.acma.gov.au/pls/radcom/register\\_search.main\\_page](http://web.acma.gov.au/pls/radcom/register_search.main_page) This site enables you to enter a postcode to search for sites in any area. Have a look – you will see what we are talking about.

This is not a sad tale because both David and I are naturally happy people and are solutions-driven. We are also lucky enough to have the financial base to do what we have had to do to protect our health. We have shielded our home using metallic-based paint and curtain fabrics developed by the Defence Force University in Germany. We do not use mobiles, cordless home phones, microwaves, T-boxes, IQs, GPS, or satellite TV. We have a computer our 4 children use, but the ADSL corded internet is switched off when not in use and the computer is always off when we are in the house.

But even this is not enough protection for David, who has become ultra sensitive. With all the work we had done the house is fine for him for 1-2 days at a time, but how can you live life indoors 24 hours a day? So in 2008 we bought acreage near Heathcote, and this is our home for 9 days out of 10. Here we have been able to structure our lifestyle for maximum health benefits.

Our nearest neighbour is 1km away, we have no electricity connected and instead rely on the DC power of wind and solar for lighting, and we use gas and wood for our other energy requirements. We have a normal phone, no computer and no internet. We have shielded this house from the 3 large base stations situated between 10 and 15km away using metal and fabric. The signals from these stations are low in any case on our property, so it is possible to have an outdoors life there.

The freedom we have both felt from stepping away from the electronic world of isolating and instant gratification has been immense. This freedom has been a beautiful side benefit to the health improvement in both of us since we so completely changed our life.

David and I are lucky enough to have found and been able to afford a solution. But there are many, many people who are effected and cannot do the same, rendering them helpless and without a voice. It would be very easy for both David and I to retire into the lovely, peaceful environment we now find ourselves in. However, we both feel a sense of responsibility to help those who suffer and those who will in the future.

While our children sleep with mobile phones under their pillows; while our telecommunication companies continue to bring us more and more electronic wireless devices to fill our world with "babble" and radiation and while they continue to put base stations wherever they like without consideration to health effects to those working and living nearby; while we are introduced to more and more channels of digital TV and radio; while it becomes normal for families to sit in separate rooms of their homes on laptops that are linked to each other and the world by WIFI; while it becomes normal to use an iPhone app or GPS to navigate our way around our world; while our State Government tells us that we 'must' be imposed with WIFI smartmeters; how can we not stand up? We feel the need, even though we know our voice is small and the only weapons we have are to raise awareness of the issue and the research, and appeal to the common sense of the people who make decisions in our world.

Please consider the plight and physical and psychological suffering of those of our population who have a sensitivity to radiation exposure, and the rest of our Australian population who are worried or unaware of the health risks.

Yours faithfully,

Lynne (and David) McDonald

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw