

THE RIVERMOUTH ACTION GROUP INC.

"SERVING MANY COMMUNITIES"

WHAT CAN'T BE DONE ALONE
WE CAN DO TOGETHER



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12 March 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir

RE: Telecommunications Amendment (Mobile Phone Towers) Bill 2011

I thank the Senate for the opportunity to make a submission on this important issue.

I have taken the time to read the amendments proposed and other submission on the Senate web site and I would make the following submission.

We agree with the amendments but suggest other amendments be made as also.

I could not find any definition for the words in the amendment or Acts which defined the two words "notification" nor "consultation".

I would suggest that these two words are most probably the two most important words in the amendment and therefore **MUST** be defined within the Act's amendments.

I have been involved in community affairs since late in 1984 and I have been through many "notifications" and "consultations" over that period. Most of them if not all were pathetic to say the least.

I did however email my Federal Member's office, Kevin Rudd, a few days ago asking if any definition was available and I have not had an email response since. I was told that they sent my email to the Health Minister's office for response. When I checked with them personally late last Friday I was told that they would chase it up early on Monday for me. Guess what Monday 12 March was a holiday in Canberra and no response as to what "notification" and "consultation" may mean under the Act if anything at all.

The Queensland Government changed the Act to no longer allow town planning objection days to be counted over the Christmas-New Year period.

Notification by Public Notice in newspapers only is not acceptable as in a few short years newspapers may not be around to read. Must be a personally addressed letter posted to each and every land owner and every house occupier of each and every property that falls partially or fully within the 500 metres of the tower site. Not some notice stuffed in a letterbox amongst junk mail.

Consultation must be a general public meeting not a divide and conquer device. In open public meeting information may and most probably come forward which telecommunication companies would not like the general public to be aware of. This one on one consultation does not assist the community in making an informed decision.

My thoughts are on community sensitive places are that any home especially those with young children are community sensitive places. Yes school, kindergartens, daycare homes, churches (funny about that I read many years ago that a church allowed mobile phone towers in their bell tower much to the displeasure of the congregation.).

I noticed that in recent times it became mandatory to include the expected (calculated emissions levels) for contours of the land surrounding mobile phone towers. This is not being done as required.

As I said above the emissions are calculated not measured and it is all done sitting in an office with no actually testing carried out for conformation.

What the community has not access to is logging spectrum analysers so that concerned citizens can actually measure the levels of emissions at their property over a given length of time and then see the un-censored results first hand.

Our Group has some money set aside to purchase such equipment but have no idea when enough money will be available to make a purchase.

Maybe the telecommunication companies should make such equipment available to community groups so that the community can see for themselves just how much emissions are entering their homes and from what source.

The telecommunication companies cry foul over putting limits on their industry and commented that now most “000” calls come in via mobile phones. What they did not mention was the huge number of accidents that happen due to using the mobile phones whilst driving. They cannot have it both ways.

Phone companies want to put more and more towers in residential areas. When I was last in Northern Territory I was able to use my vodafone in Alice Springs, in parts of Katherine and in Darwin. If phone companies want to build phone towers I suggest that the Stewart Highway needs hundreds more as does Cape York and most of the out of the way places.

Nor was there any mention of the amount of Cyber Bulling over mobile Phones just “000” calls.

Industry Codes are not worth the paper they are written on to protect the general public. We need enforceable legalisation on telecommunication towers, their emission levels and placements.

When I took the time and looked up the emitted power of a number mobile phone towers with some near my own home I found that the mobile phone antennas near the bus stop where many high school students wait busses had the highest emissions of the tower outputs had come across.

A minimum of two community places should be made available to members of community groups to attend every mobile phone carrier’s staff training courses on radiation hazards and its measurements which are required under Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

Another submitter suggested that if a carrier could not place their phone tower where they wanted to near a school and had to place it elsewhere the resultant levels at the school would be the same as the carrier would simply boost the emissions to achieve the same result thus the school children would still be subjected to a similar lever of radiation no matter where the tower ended up. Is this the intention of the amendments proposed to allow such actions? If not, what amendments will be put in place to stop this from happening?

Regards

Barry Wilson
Secretary
The Rivermouth Action Group Inc