

Subject: Submission re The Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011
Date: Wednesday, 9 November 2011 12:57:42 PM

Re: The Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011

Dear Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications,

We ask you to support greater protection for communities across Australia in regards to building or modifying a telecommunication tower.

Recently we found out about a telecommunication tower application (to our local council) to build a base station, on a new site, approximately 400 metres from our property. It was only by luck that we found out about it - the telecommunication company requested access to their proposed new tower site through a local private road, otherwise we would not have known about it at all until it was built. Many of us in the area were very upset about it, for various reasons: possible health risks and the breaking of a beautiful treeline on the ridge being two of them.

We mounted a successful campaign to persuade the telecommunication company to look elsewhere, and in the process found many seeming discrepancies in the application, such as the application said there would be no impact on vegetation, yet tree cutting agencies came in to quote for the job of cutting down trees. It also said minimal cut and fill would happen, yet the plans required significant cut and fill. On the application map, a whole section of future home blocks had been left off that would have been within 100 metres of the tower. There was also 15 threatened or significant vegetation species in a road reserve that was going to be cleared for access.

These only came to light after many of us had time to study the application, talk to neighbours, research the area and analyse the results.

We have been told that: ***Amends the Telecommunications Act 1997 to: require owners and occupiers of land to be notified of a proposal to either build or modify a telecommunications tower within 500 metres of their property; provide that notified owners and occupiers have 30 days in which to respond to the proposed development; provide that new telecommunications towers cannot be declared to be low impact; limit the size and capacity of telecommunications towers; provide that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) can issue installation permits for high impact facilities only in extraordinary circumstances; disallow ACMA from considering commercial interests when determining the importance of a facility in a telecommunications network; require ACMA, when considering developments near community sensitive sites, to be satisfied that all alternative sites are unfeasible; and enable local communities to appeal a facility installation permit being granted with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.***

We ask you to please support these amendments.

Sincerely,
Deborah and Robert Anker