



WHO International EMF Project

Report on EMF activities in Australia during 2015-2016

ARPANSA EMF Activities

From ARPANSA's perspective, extremely low frequency (ELF) magnetic fields from electrical power infrastructure and radiofrequency (RF) emissions from mobile phone base stations remain the main focus of public concern within Australia. The roll-out of wireless computer networks in schools continues to cause concern in some people.

Public Information

ARPANSA provides the community with information and advice on radiation protection matters including issues related to EMF. The ARPANSA website includes a "[For the Public](#)" section that provides information and advice most relevant to the community. The section includes a range of [Factsheets](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and various [Hot Topics](#) (including powerlines, mobile phone base stations and smart meters). ARPANSA also provides the "[Talk to a Scientist](#)" program so members of the public can call ARPANSA and speak with a scientist about radiation protection topics. The ARPANSA Communications Team is looking at further ways to redevelop the information provided on the ARPANSA website.

EMR Literature Survey

ARPANSA has continued publishing on its web site monthly summaries (with select comments) of recent scientific papers dealing with EMF and health. The papers are selected on the basis of importance to the protection of health, on perceived likely interest to the wider public or where the reported research is Australian. The summaries are available at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/RadiationProtection/EMR/literature/index.cfm>.

EMR Health Complaints Register

ARPANSA commenced Australia's first centralised Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR) Health Complaints Register in 2003. The Register collects reports of health concerns related to possible EMR field exposures in the range of 0-300 GHz. Members of the public who believe they have suffered ill-effects as a result of exposure to EMR can lodge a written complaint to the Register. The analysis of EMR Health Complaints Register Data for the period July 2014 - June 2015 is available at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/RadiationProtection/emr/index.cfm>. A total of 22 reports were received in the period (since its commencement the Register has received a total of 148 reports). The reports included a number of subjective symptoms for which the people reporting attributed to various EMF sources, but mainly smart meters.

Wi-Fi in Schools measurement study

ARPANSA is undertaking in the second half of 2016 the first comprehensive measurement study of exposure levels from Wi-Fi in Australian schools. This study will provide an assessment of the typical levels of exposure to RF electromagnetic energy (EME) in the Australian school setting to demonstrate that exposure levels are very low and improving community understanding.

Research – EMF and Health

The majority of Australian research into health effects of EMF is funded through the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC). The NHMRC is currently funding two Centres of Research Excellence in EMF:

[The Australian Centre for Electromagnetic Bioeffects Research](#) (ACEBR)

[The Centre for Population Health Research on Electromagnetic Energy](#) (PRESEE)

Ongoing research includes the Australian contribution to the Mobi-Kids study and other epidemiological investigations, studies of psychological and cognitive outcomes of RF exposures, dosimetry studies and exposure assessments, studies of thermal regulation, RF and EEG, in vitro studies examining interaction mechanisms and other investigations.

Policies, Legislation and Standards

ARPANSA Advice on exposure limits for ELF Fields

ARPANSA has revised its advice on exposure limits to ELF electric and magnetic fields by referring to the ICNIRP (2010) ELF Guidelines (see <http://www.arpana.gov.au/RadiationProtection/basics/elf.cfm>).

Replacement of Australian Radiocommunications Act

The Australian Government is currently working on new legislation to replace the Radiocommunications Act 1992. This work is in response to the Australian Government's decision to implement the recommendations of a review on Australia's spectrum management framework (<https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/spectrum/spectrum-review>). One of the major recommendations was to replace the current legislative arrangements with new legislation that removes prescriptive process for a simpler and more flexible framework.

Industry EMF Management Handbook

The Energy Networks Association which is the industry body representing electricity transmission and distribution businesses throughout Australia has published an [EMF Management Handbook](#). The purpose of the handbook is to provide guidance to the industry on managing the issue of ELF fields and health.

Conferences and Meetings

Science and Wireless

The annual Science and Wireless public event was hosted by ACEBR (Australian Centre for Electromagnetic Bioeffects Research) at RMIT University on 8 December 2015. At the event ACEBR researchers presented their current research projects followed by a keynote presentation on international research developments (<http://www.rmit.edu.au/events/all-events/conferences/2015/december/science-and-wireless-2015/>).

EME Reference Group meeting

The Electromagnetic Energy Reference Group (EMERG) has been established by ARPANSA to enable input from the community and other stakeholders on issues relating to EME and health (<http://www.arpana.gov.au/AboutUs/collaboration/emerg.cfm>). There was an EMERG meeting on 17 November 2015 which focussed on the issue of occupational RF exposure (http://www.arpana.gov.au/pubs/aboutus/emerg/151117_EMERGSummary.pdf).

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