



# WHO International EMF Project

## Report on EMF activities in Australia during 2016-2017

### 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 which was recently given a facelift and relaunched includes an "Understanding Radiation" section that provides information and advice most relevant to the community (<https://www.arpansa.gov.au/understanding-radiation>). 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 (<https://www.arpansa.gov.au/contact-us/talk-to-a-scientist>). The ARPANSA Communications Team is looking at further ways to redevelop the information provided on the ARPANSA website.

### Radiation Literature Survey

ARPANSA has continued publishing on its web site summaries (with select comments) of recent scientific papers dealing with EMF and health (as well as other radiation types). 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 2015 - June 2016 is available at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/RadiationProtection/emr/index.cfm>. A total of 7 reports were received in the period (since its commencement the Register has received a total of 155 reports). The reports included a number of subjective symptoms for which the people reporting attributed to various EMF sources, including smart meters, household electrical sources, mobile phone base stations and wireless networks.

### Wi-Fi in Schools measurement study

ARPANSA has completed the Wi-Fi in Schools Measurement Study where exposure to radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME) from Wi-Fi and other sources was measured in 23 schools in the states of Victoria and New South Wales. This study showed that the typical RF exposure of children from Wi-Fi at school is very low and comparable or lower to other sources in the environment such as radio, TV and mobile phone base stations. The study has been published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, Radiation

Protection Dosimetry. More information about the study including free access to the full paper is available from <http://www.arpana.gov.au/RadiationProtection/wifi/index.cfm>.

## 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) from a levy on the telecommunications industry. The NHMRC is currently funding two Centres of Research Excellence in EMF:

The Australian Centre for Electromagnetic Bioeffects Research (<https://acebr.uow.edu.au/index.html>)

The Centre for Population Health Research on Electromagnetic Energy  
(<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/epidemiology/clinepi/presee.html>)

## Policies, Legislation and Standards

### *Revision of RPS3*

ARPANSA is planning to revise its current RF Standard (RPS3) (<http://www.arpana.gov.au/pubs/rps/rps3.pdf>) following the publication of the revised ICNIRP Guidelines and the WHO Environmental Health Criteria review. Both the revised ICNIRP Guidelines and WHO review are not expected to be published till late in 2017 and possibly in 2018. Given that the publication of these documents is some time away ARPANSA will begin the process of the review of RPS3 in order to shorten the process when the ICNIRP and WHO documents become available.

## 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 22 November 2016. The focus of the event was a keynote presentation on 'Radiofrequency radiation applications in treatment of Alzheimer's disease' followed by a brief review of ICNIRP exposure guidelines and 5G standards. (<https://www.rmit.edu.au/events/all-events/conferences/2016/november/science-and-wireless-2016>).

### *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 25 May 2017 which focussed on advice to medical practitioners on electromagnetic hypersensitivity.

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