



WHO International EMF Project

Report on EMF activities in Australia during 2014-2015

ARPANSA EMF Activities

From ARPANSA's perspective, ELF magnetic fields from electrical power infrastructure and 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 and broadband fixed wireless base stations continue 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. ARPANSA has changed its website to improve navigation to information and advice most relevant to the community by introducing a new "[For the Public](#)" section. The factsheets on the ARPANSA website have been rewritten in a more consistent format and to make the information easier to understand. ARPANSA has also created a new "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" section on its website.

ARPANSA has introduced a "[Talk to a Scientist](#)" program so members of the public can call ARPANSA and speak with a scientist about radiation protection topics.

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 2013 - June 2014 is available at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/RadiationProtection/emr/index.cfm>. A total of 35 reports were received in the period (since its commencement the Register has received a total of 126 reports). The reports included a number where the reported subjective symptoms were attributed to various ELF and RF sources, mainly smart meters.

Survey of residential magnetic fields

ARPANSA has published the results of a survey of residential power-frequency magnetic fields in Melbourne. The survey found that children's residential exposure in Australia was generally comparable with that in other countries. The study has been published in the Journal of Radiation Protection Dosimetry and is available from http://www.arpansa.gov.au/News/whatsnew/news1_140508.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](#) (ACEBR)

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

Ongoing research includes the Australian contributions to the Mobi-Kids study, studies of the psychological 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 Guidelines for ELF and Static Electric and Magnetic Fields

In 2014 the ARPANSA Radiation Health Committee took the decision to make the “ARPANSA Guidelines for ELF and Static Electric and Magnetic Fields” a guide rather than a standard. It has been modified to harmonise, as far as possible in the Australian context, with the ICNIRP 2010 low-frequency guidelines. This new form of the document requires an additional process of public consultation. Publication of the Guidelines is expected by the end of 2015.

Conferences and Meetings

ICNIRP Workshop on RF Field Health Effects and Standards

The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), ACEBR and ARPANSA jointly hosted a Workshop on Radiofrequency Field Health Effects and Standards on 11 November 2014 at the University of Wollongong, Australia. This international workshop, open to the public, was aimed at discussing the latest evidence of health effects from exposure to RF fields and the implications to ICNIRP’s current plan in updating their high frequency (HF) Guidelines.

Details on the Workshop are available from

<http://www.icnirp.org/en/workshops/article/workshop-rf-2014.html>

Science and Wireless

The annual Science and Wireless public event was hosted by ACEBR (Australian Centre for Electromagnetic Bioeffects Research) in the evening of 11 November 2014 at the University of Wollongong, Australia. RF health experts gave presentation focused on “Living in a wireless world of mobile phone, base stations & Wi-Fi: Health & electro-hypersensitivity (EHS)”. Some concerned community members at the event did not agree with the position that EHS is not caused by RF sources. However the RF experts present all agreed that the attribution of EHS to RF exposure is not scientifically based. Details on this event are available from

<http://acebr.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@acebr/documents/doc/uow181740.pdf>

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