

WHO International EMF Project

International Advisory Committee meeting

New Zealand country report 2015

Policies and legislation on EMF exposures

Legislation and Standards

There have been no changes to legislation since the previous IAC meeting. A new Radiation Safety Bill to replace the Radiation Protection Act 1965 is going through Parliament at the moment. The Bill (like the existing Act) only covers ionising radiation, as it is felt that existing legislation already provides sufficient scope to cover non-ionising radiation, whose nature and effects are quite different to ionising radiation.

A consultation document on proposed changes to the *Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities) Regulations 2008* has been released. Amongst other things, these Regulations mandate use of NZS 2772.1:1999 *Radiofrequency Fields Part 1: Maximum exposure levels – 3 kHz to 300 GHz* (whose limits are based on the ICNIRP 1998 Guidelines). No changes to the exposure limits are suggested, but it proposed to cite AS/NZS 2772.2:2011: *Radiofrequency Fields Part 2: Principles and Methods of Computation – 3 kHz to 300 GHz* as a replacement for the obsolete NZS 6609.2:1990 *Radiofrequency Radiation: Principles and Methods of Measurement – 300 kHz to 300 GHz* for calculating and measuring exposures.

New Zealand representatives have been participating in revisions to AS/NZS 2772.2:2011. These include significant updates to the material on evaluating uncertainties.

Policies

The Interagency Committee on the Health Effects of Non-Ionising Fields met twice during the year to provide the New Zealand Director General of Health with scientific and technical advice on any potential health effects from exposures to ELF and RF fields. The results from recent research considered by the Committee have not given cause for concern and no change to existing recommendations. The Committee has prepared a *Report to Ministers* summarising findings of research carried out since the last report was prepared in 2004, how EMF issues are handled in New Zealand, and a summary of topics of current interest. The report is available on the Ministry of Health website www.health.govt.nz.

The Committee has made a submission on the new Radiation Safety Bill, supporting the exclusion of non-ionising radiation from the scope of the Bill.

Public concerns and information activities

The Ministry of Health website is updated regularly to add new topics of interest and add links to new information of relevance (such as national and international reviews of recent research). The full range of information on NIR is most easily accessed at www.health.govt.nz/our-work/radiation-safety/non-ionising-radiation.

There have been no major public concerns over the past year. The Ministry of Education has carried out a major upgrade of ICT in schools around the country. This includes the provision of WiFi, which (with very few exceptions) has been well received.

Research activities

Researchers at the Massey University Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR) have contributed to further papers based on the INTEROCC data. CPHR researchers are continuing interviews for the New Zealand part of the MOBI-Kids study.

Researchers from the University of Auckland have published a paper looking at New Zealand brain tumour rates in relation to the uptake of mobile phones. No correlations were evident.

New Zealand Ministry of Health

15 April 2015