

**WHO International EMF project**  
**15th International Advisory Committee meeting**  
***New Zealand country report 2010***

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## **Policies and legislation on EMF exposure**

### **Legislation**

Further work on incorporating national policies and Standards on EMF exposure in environmental legislation has been undertaken over the past year.

A National Environmental Standard (NES) for Electricity Transmission promulgated under the Resource Management Act came into force in January 2010<sup>\*</sup>. While most of the Standard is concerned with non-EMF matters, it also effectively mandates compliance with the ICNIRP Guidelines when undertaking activities such as increasing the current or voltage rating of an existing transmission line.

The Ministry for the Environment has also published a user guide for the National Environmental Standard covering telecommunications facilities<sup>†</sup>. This includes guidance on implementing the section of the Standard covering exposures to radiofrequency fields.

### **Policies**

The *Interagency Committee on the Health Effects of Non-Ionising Fields* held two further meetings 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 (essentially to comply with ICNIRP Guidelines, and apply low or no cost measures to avoid or reduce exposures) has been considered necessary.

There has been some discussion in the *Committee* about the current New Zealand radiofrequency field exposure Standard (NZS 2772:Part 1:1999) which dates from 1999 and is based on the ICNIRP Guidelines. While there is no concern about the limits recommended in the Standard (and the recent ICNIRP reaffirmation of the 1998 Guidelines was very timely in this respect), it is felt that the rationale is outdated, some guidance on implementation would be helpful and the fact that the Standard has to be purchased limits the willingness or ability of some to obtain and read it.

### **Public concerns**

#### **Cellsites**

The Government response to a Local Government and Environment Select Committee report regarding three petitions about cellsites has been published<sup>‡</sup>. The Select

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<sup>\*</sup> For more detail see <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/electricity-transmission.html>

<sup>†</sup> <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/nas-telecommunication-facilities-user-guide/index.html>

<sup>‡</sup> The report and response are available at [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz) – search for “2005/179”

Committee made two recommendations to the Government relating to radiofrequency fields and health:

- To consider whether a review of the New Zealand Standard for Radiofrequency Fields is necessary to ensure that it is still in line with world's best practice;
- To review the membership of the *Interagency Committee* to ensure better community representation and expertise in risk assessment

In its response, the Government stated that it considered that “New Zealand has a comprehensive and robust framework in place for managing the risks associated with radiofrequency fields that reflects current international best practice” and that it did not consider a review of the *Interagency Committee* necessary as it already has appropriate expertise and representation.

### **Research activities**

Staff at the Auckland School of Population Health and the Massey University Centre for Public Health Research continue to work on the IARC extension of the Interphone study looking at occupational exposures to EMFs and possible relationships to tumours of the brain and nervous system.

### **Public information activities**

The New Zealand Telecommunications Carriers' Forum (TCF) has developed a set of Community Engagement Guidelines to help wireless network operators standardise their approach to local communities when installing new infrastructure. These are intended to complement any obligations under planning rules. The Guidelines are available through the TCF website [www.tcf.org.nz](http://www.tcf.org.nz).

*New Zealand National Radiation Laboratory/Ministry of Health*

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