

WHO International EMF project
16th International Advisory Committee meeting
New Zealand country report 2011

Policies and legislation on EMF exposure

Legislation

After a period of activity developing National Policy Statements and Environmental Standards covering EMF under planning legislation (Resource Management Act) there have been no further legislative developments over the past year. Implementation of these legislative instruments appears to have progressed smoothly.

A joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Standard on the assessment of radiofrequency fields (AS/NZS 2772.2:2011 *Principles and methods of measurement and computation – 3 kHz to 300 GHz*) has just been finalised and should be available very soon. This is a major update of the existing RF measurement Standard.

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.

At its most recent meeting the Committee considered the revised ICNIRP low frequency Guidelines, and concluded that they should be recommended for use in New Zealand. The Department of Labour has already agreed that they should form the basis of Occupational Health and Safety assessments for EMF exposures. The Ministry of Health will update its information material on low frequency EMFs and recommend that stakeholders use the new Guidelines.

Public concerns and information activities

There is a steady trickle of public enquiries on EMF issues, often associated with consideration of house purchases near transmission lines, or plans by telecommunication companies to erect new sites. Exposures from WiFi equipment are also of occasional interest. Enquirers are often referred to Fact Sheets and other resources developed by the WHO EMF Project.

Two TV documentaries covering EMF issues have been developed over the past year but neither has yet been broadcast.

Research activities

Researchers at the Massey University Centre for Public Health Research continue to work on the INTEROCC study (extension of the Interphone study looking at possible relationships between occupational exposures to EMFs and other agents and tumours of the brain and nervous system). Data collection is complete and it is now being analysed. Results should be ready for presentation towards the end of 2011.

There is interest in a New Zealand arm of the MobiKids study but to date no funding has been obtained.

New Zealand National Radiation Laboratory/Ministry of Health

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