



Australian Mobile
Telecommunications
Association

AMTA – ARPANSA Liaison Forum

Summary of the Meeting

Held on 16 June 2017



Australian Government
Australian Radiation Protection
and Nuclear Safety Agency

The Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) and the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) met via videoconference at ARPANSA's facilities on Friday 16 June 2017.

The objective of the AMTA-ARPANSA Liaison Forum is to provide an open, frank and transparent exchange of information and views on radiation safety and radiation protection issues especially in the area of Electromagnetic Energy (EME), with due regard to the different roles the organisations play.

Industry update

The 5th generation mobile network (5G) is the immediate focus of the industry at the moment, with its rollout estimated in 2020. TPG has now entered the market as the fourth mobile phone carrier in Australia. Industry is closely observing the Department of Communication and the Arts' reviews on the Spectrum, and Powers & Immunities. The industry has expressed concern that government policy may not be able to keep up with the fast-paced proliferation of the mobile phone technology.

EME issues

The 5G network will require base stations and devices to operate under higher frequencies (above 6 gigahertz, GHz). There is a gap in international standards on compliance assessment of base stations and devices operating beyond 6 GHz. It is currently being addressed by the International Electrotechnical Commission, which in turn will feed into the Australian Standard.

The change in exposure moving to 5G

Industry informed that cumulative EME exposure levels may increase slightly with the addition of the 5G service into the market, however total EME will still be very low. As 5G is being introduced older services such as 2G and 3G will be phased out and since the 5G network also operates more efficiently, the average EME exposure to a person may potentially be reduced.

NHMRC EME research funding

Industry continued to express concern about the potential loss of capability and capacity of Australia's centre of research excellence on EME. ARPANSA will continue to have ongoing discussions with all other relevant government agencies to find a short-term and long-term solution to the funding of research on EME.

Revision of ICNIRP Guidelines

The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) was expected to publish its guidelines after the publication of the World Health Organization's Environmental Health Criteria (EHC) review on the health effects of EME. It is now anticipated that the publication of the EHC will be further delayed hence it is not clear whether ICNIRP will publish its guidelines irrespective of the EHC.

Review of RPS3

ARPANSA is planning to start the process of reviewing its Radiation Protection Standard no.3 (RPS3) this year. ARPANSA will adopt the values of exposure limits from the revised ICNIRP Guidelines once they become available – in the meantime ARPANSA will review the content of the RPS3 document except the exposure limit values.

Review of ARPANSA Environmental EME Report

The EME report has been reviewed this year by a stakeholder working group and will be considered by ARPANSA. The revised EME report is currently being reviewed by the ARPANSA's Communications team and is also planned to be reviewed by an internal ARPANSA Focus Group before its release.