



Australian Government

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency

Dr Michele Bruniges
Secretary
New South Wales Department of Education

D163536

Dear Dr Bruniges,

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) is an Australian Government agency charged with the responsibility of protecting the health and safety of people, and the environment, from the harmful effects of radiation. In order to provide the best advice on the protection of the Australian public from the effects of radiation, ARPANSA undertakes its own research and reviews the relevant scientific research including exposure to radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME) emissions from Wi-Fi and other telecommunications sources.

Wi-Fi is now very common in schools across Australia. Some individuals and groups including parents have publicly expressed concern that the technology has the potential to adversely affect children as well as the general population. In response to this public concern, ARPANSA is planning to undertake a measurement program of exposure levels from Wi-Fi in Australian schools, principally within New South Wales and Victoria. Similar international studies have shown the RF EME levels from similar uses of Wi-Fi in schools are significantly lower than the public exposure limit in the Australian RF Standard. This Standard is designed to protect people of all age groups including children from the known harmful effects of RF EME.

The ARPANSA study is intended to provide information to address community concerns on RF exposure from Wi-Fi in schools and to reinforce ARPANSA's current advice that RF exposures from Wi-Fi in schools are at a level that does not adversely affect the health of children or the general population. The outcomes of the study will be publicised on ARPANSA's website.

We are seeking advice in relation to the process required by your department for the implementation of such a project. In addition we are seeking your assistance in recommending schools that may be interested in taking part in the study. Attached is an information pack about the study. For further information about the study you can contact Dr Rick Tinker, Director, Assessment and Advice Section on 03 9433 2326 or rick.tinker@arpansa.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen Solomon
Chief Radiation Health Scientist
Radiation Health Service



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To Australian Primary and Secondary Schools

Wi-Fi is now very common including in schools across Australia. ARPANSA is undertaking the first comprehensive measurement study of exposure levels from Wi-Fi in Australian schools. This study will provide an assessment of the typical levels of exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic energy in the Australian school setting to demonstrate that exposure levels are very low.

Participation in this measurement study by schools will contribute to science in the field and provide a better understanding of the current exposure situation for children and teachers associated with the use of Wi-Fi networks in schools. This should allow for more informed school communities on the use of these technologies and help ARPANSA to provide relevant advice to address concerns about these exposures and potential health effects.

ARPANSA's current advice is that *there is no established scientific evidence that the low exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic energy from Wi-Fi adversely affects the health of children or the general population*. More information can be found on our factsheet ['Wi-Fi and Health'](#).

If your school is interested in participating, please fill out the enclosed expression of interest form and return it to us by **31 August 2016**. We will contact you shortly with more details about the measurement study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Solomon".

Dr Stephen Solomon
Chief Radiation Health Scientist
Radiation Health Services





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The ARPANSA Wi-Fi in Schools Measurement Study: Information Pack

Why is Wi-Fi relevant in the classroom?

The use of Wi-Fi technology has become increasingly common in many places throughout the community, including schools. Through the use of this technology, electronic devices are connected to a computer network wirelessly using radio waves, or radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME), thereby eliminating or reducing the need for network cables in the classrooms. A common example is a laptop or tablet connected to the internet via Wi-Fi access points around the school.

Who is ARPANSA?

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) is an Australian Government agency charged with the responsibility of protecting the health and safety of people, and the environment, from the harmful effects of radiation. In order to provide the best advice on the protection of the Australian public from the effects of radiation, ARPANSA undertakes its own research and reviews the relevant scientific research including exposure to RF EME emissions from Wi-Fi and other telecommunications sources.

Why is ARPANSA undertaking a survey of Wi-Fi in schools?

People in a Wi-Fi enabled environment are exposed to low level RF EME when they are using a computer on the Wi-Fi network and also when they are near an operating access point. There is some public concern about potential health effects associated with RF EME emissions. This will be the first comprehensive measurement program of Wi-Fi in schools in Australia.

Similar international studies have shown the RF EME levels from similar uses of Wi-Fi in schools are significantly lower than the public exposure limit in the Australian RF Standard. This Standard is designed to protect people of all age groups including children from the known harmful effects of RF EME. For more information about ARPANSA's current position on Wi-Fi see http://www.arpansa.gov.au/RadiationProtection/Factsheets/is_wifi.cfm

The ARPANSA measurement study aims to provide an assessment of typical exposure levels in the Australian school settings to demonstrate that exposure levels are very low. This initiative by ARPANSA to assess typical exposure levels will assist in improving the community understanding of Wi-Fi emissions in the Australian environment.

ARPANSA is seeking participation in this study by interested schools.





What will the survey cover?

It is planned that up to twenty schools will be included in this measurement study, selected mainly from Victoria and New South Wales. The survey will focus on the measurement of the RF EME level resulting from the use of Wi-Fi networks in these schools, and include a comparison against the public exposure limits in the Australian Standard. To better understand the EME exposure environment in these schools, the Wi-Fi measurement results will be compared to the exposure levels from other EME sources in the everyday environment, such as mobile phone base stations, radio and TV towers.

How will ARPANSA measure Wi-Fi in schools?

Measurements will be conducted in one to two locations in the school building(s), in representative locations such as a classroom, the library, or a computer laboratory, together with one location in the schoolyard. A two-person scientific team from ARPANSA will conduct the measurements at times suitable for the school with a focus to minimize disruption.

What do participating schools get out of this?

By participating in this measurement study, schools will:

- Be provided with a tailored report that will include the measurement results in detail.
- Have the option of an information session for the parent and community group and teachers regarding the Wi-Fi measurement study prior to the measurements being undertaken by ARPANSA staff. These will be conducted at the discretion of the school principal.

ARPANSA staff will also have entry and exit meetings with the school principal to discuss locations that are suitable for the measurements, and, after the measurements are done, to discuss the results.

Participation on this measurement study will also contribute to the science – providing a better understanding of the current exposure situation for children and teachers associated with the use of Wi-Fi networks in schools. This should allow for more informed school communities (parents, teachers and students) on the use of Wi-Fi in schools.





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The ARPANSA Wi-Fi in Schools Measurement Study: Expression of Interest Form

This expression of interest (Eoi) form is for schools who are interested in participating in the ARPANSA Wi-Fi in schools measurement study. Information on the study can be found on the information pack enclosed.

Section 1: General details of the school

School name							
Address							
Type of school (select one that applies)							
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2: Details of main contact person

Communication about this Eoi form and subsequent application for the measurement study will be directed to the main contact person.

Name			
Position			
Postal Address			
Phone no.		Mobile no.	
Email			

Section 3: Other information

Brief reason for participation	
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..... Date / /

Signature (School Principal)





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Please return form to:

Dr Ken Karipidis
Assistant Director, Assessment and Advice Section
Radiation Health Services Branch

Postal address:
619 Lower Plenty Road
Yallambie VIC 3085

Phone: +61 3 9433 2282
Fax: +61 3 9432 1835
Email: ken.karipidis@arpansa.gov.au

Not later than 31 August 2016.

Further enquiries on this EoI form can also be directed to the contact above.

