



MP for Mana

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications
and Digital Media

Minister for Government Digital Services

Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing)

BCDM1920-031

Lis Martinac
Via FYI.org

- 9 SEP 2019

Dear Lis,

Thank you for your message of 2 August 2019 via the FYI website regarding 5G technology, possible health impacts and consultation.

Your letter has not been processed under the Official Information Act, as you have not requested specific information. I hope this response provides you with useful information in relation to your concerns.

I appreciate that you, along with some others, have concerns about the potential health impacts of transmissions from 5G cell sites. Please be assured New Zealand has a robust regulatory regime in place that is based on international standards to ensure the safety of our communities.

The health effects of cell sites are regulated either under the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities) Regulations 2016 (NESTF 2016) or through the relevant district and regional plans. All network providers rolling out a 5G network are required to comply with the relevant provisions of the NESTF 2016 regulations, the Resource Management Act 1991 and the relevant resource management plan. I am advised that the Ministry for the Environment is not considering any changes to the NESTF at this stage.

The process to develop National Environmental Standards is governed by the Resource Management Act 1991, and is led by the Ministry for the Environment. The NESTF was initially introduced in 2007 following public consultation. Following a review in 2013, amendments to the NESTF were proposed and finalised in 2016 and came into force in January 2017.

The NESTF 2016 regulations require compliance with a New Zealand Radio Frequency field exposure standard¹ that sets maximum exposure limits for the public. These limits are more than 50 times lower than the levels at which adverse effects might occur. The regulations further require minimisation of unnecessary radiofrequency exposure if this can be easily achieved.

¹ NZS 2772: Part 1: 1999 Radiofrequency Fields Part 1 – Maximum Exposure Levels – 3 kHz to 300 GHz

Developing or reviewing a New Zealand Standard involves processes coordinated through Standards New Zealand and include convening expert committees and undertaking public consultation on draft standards.

The standard is based on guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) an independent advisory board that works in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO). ICNIRP is consulting on revised guidelines.

The ICNIRP guidelines and their underlying basis have been adopted in a number of countries. The standard that specifies assessment methods for radiofrequency fields is the Australia/New Zealand Standard (AS/NZ 2772). Further information can be obtained from the ICNIRP website (<http://www.icnirp.org/>) and the WHO International Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) Project website (<http://www.who.int/peh-emf/project/en/>).

The Ministry of Health (MOH) convenes an Interagency Committee on the Health Effects of Non-Ionising Fields, which provides the Director General of Health with high quality, independent scientific and technical advice on potential health effects from exposures to extremely low frequency or radiofrequency fields. The Committee meets every six months to review and monitor new research in this area. At their meeting in February 2019, they concluded there was no evidence which would indicate a need to revise the current regulatory settings. The Committee is keeping up to date with the proposed changes to the ICNIRP guidelines, and will consider whether the New Zealand standard should be amended to reflect the new guidelines once these are available. Further information on the MOH work on non-ionising radiation and the independent monitoring of existing cell sites can be found on their website (<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/radiation-safety/non-ionising-radiation>).

Radio Spectrum Management (RSM) is the agency responsible for technical aspects of the 5G deployment. In March 2018 they released the discussion document *Preparing for 5G in New Zealand* seeking feedback on Government's preparations for 5G. The full document and submissions are available on the RSM website (<https://www.rsm.govt.nz/projects-and-auctions/consultations/preparing-for-5g-in-new-zealand-technical-consultation/>).

Thank you for writing to me about this issue. Please be assured that I take this matter very seriously.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media