



*Warrandyte Community Association*

INC. A0042350W  
PO Box 75, **Warrandyte** 3113

*The following is correspondence regarding the proposed Vodafone Tower in the Warrandyte Recreation Reserve.*

***From Mel Blaser, local resident to WCA, 1 January 2010:***

**Attn: President Dick Davies**

**cc: Val Polley, Jonathan Upson, Bruce Davidson, Kerrie Boyle**

Dear Mr Davies

I am writing in relation to a proposed 30 metre Vodafone Mobile Phone Tower that the Manningham City Council (MCC) are looking to place at the Warrandyte Reserve, which is to replace one of the lighting poles around the perimeter of the oval.

This proposal has been cleverly disguised in the Warrandyte Reserve Draft Management Plan as part of the "improvements" for the Reserve, which was tabled at the council meeting back on 30 June 2009. Owing to this, many Warrandyte residents have been completely unaware that there was such a proposal in place, and only a handful became aware of this after stumbling across a small article in the Manningham Leader dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009, stating that "Councillors have approved plans for a second Mobile Phone Tower in as many months". According to the Council Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009, council officers and representatives from TCI Pty Ltd (on behalf of Vodafone) met with representatives of the Warrandyte Football and Cricket Clubs as far back as February 2009 to discuss the prospects of the placement of a Mobile Phone Tower around the perimeter of the oval, and to offer the clubs a brand new digital scoreboard in exchange (which would double as the telecommunications company's equipment shed), effectively buying their support for the tower.

I was wondering, since the Warrandyte Community Association (WCA) have meetings with these councillors on a regular basis, whether you and your members were actually made aware of this proposal? Has this topic, which is of grave concern to not just the Football and Cricket Clubs, but to the entire Warrandyte Community, been brought to the attention of all the members of the WCA? I have read through the Minutes of the last Meeting the WCA had with the MCC on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009, and noted that there was no mention of this issue. I find this rather puzzling, especially since one member of the WCA is, in fact, also a councillor for the MCC, and also holds a place on the newly formed Warrandyte Reserve Telecommunications Base Station Committee - a committee the MCC has recently formed to hear any community concerns on this issue.

I personally, along with an increasing number of residents, have serious concerns about the possible health implications that placing a tower of this magnitude in such a built up area poses to the Warrandyte Community, for the following reasons...

1. According to the MCC's November Minutes, Council's Manager of Statutory Planning has deemed the facility to be "not low impact" (I would say that this equates to HIGH IMPACT under the Australian Communications & Media Authority (ACMA) Code of Practice), which I believe is good enough reason to not place a tower of this magnitude in such a built up area.  
Furthermore, council has also stated that the strength of the RF fields emitted by mobile phone towers is, in fact, "greatest at its source". Given the fact that the Warrandyte Junior and Senior Football Club members will be playing directly underneath this proposed tower on a weekly basis, this should be a huge concern to the club, due to the potential long-term effects this could have on the players' health.

This proposal is also going to potentially affect the health of the children and teachers of the Warrandyte Kindergarten, the Warrandyte Senior Citizens, the Maternal Health Nurse, the members of the Netball Club, the Tennis Club, the Warrandyte Uniting Church, small businesses at Goldfield Plaza, Anderson's Creek Primary School staff & students, and surrounding residents. All these people are within such close proximity to this proposed site (the closest residents are a mere 90 metres away), and stand to benefit nothing from this deal.

It seems to me, therefore, to be a proposal that has not been based on common sense and the best interest of the community as a whole, but one that has been based solely on the best financial outcome for Council, as they will be receiving \$15,000.00 p/a in rent (with a potential 4% p/a increase) for the land, and the funding for the scoreboard will be provided by the telecommunications company, rather than having to be provided for by council.

2. I have in my possession, a compelling medical report compiled in 2009 by several renowned Neurosurgeons that states the following concerns...  
"Cell phone base stations or masts emit EMR continuously and at far greater power than cell phones".

The non-thermal effects of EMR on cells and tissue systems within the near-field of the antenna once thought to be safe is now being contested in this scientific literature.

According to several scientific peer-reviewed studies from 7 different countries worldwide, low-intensity EMF can in fact break DNA or modulate it structurally.

According to this report, many independent laboratory investigations have suggested adverse biologic effects of cell phone and mast radiation.

In August 2007, an international working group of scientists, researchers and public health policy professionals (The BioInitiative Working Group) released its report on electromagnetic fields (EMF) and health. It raises evidence-based concern about the safety of existing public limits that regulate how much EMF is allowable from all sources, including Mobile Phone Towers / Base Stations.

The report concludes that “the aforementioned epidemiologic and laboratory findings underscore the need for reassessment by governments worldwide of mast radiation exposure standards and the usage and deployment of this technology”.

I have a full copy of this report if you would like to read it in its entirety, but have not included a copy with this letter as it is eleven (11) pages long. If you're interested in reading it, however, please let me know and I'd be happy to give you a copy.

Finally, I was wondering, as WCA is concerned about all aspects of community life and protecting the environment, whether you, or any of the members of the WCA, would be interested in raising community awareness in relation to this proposal, and whether one or more representatives from the WCA would be available to attend the next Mullum Mullum Ward meeting, to lend their support to this important public health issue which I, and an increasing number of the general public, believe is so vital for the future health and well-being of our entire Warrandyte Community.

The next Mullum Mullum Ward meeting is to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010, at the Warrandyte Senior Citizens Centre at 7:30pm.

Also, there is a petition placed on the noticeboard at the Warrandyte Bakery and one on the noticeboard @ Goldfields Plaza if you or any of your members would like to sign it.

I would appreciate your feedback on this, and would like to know the viewpoint of the WCA on this issue.

Kind Regards,  
Melinda Blaser

**PS: I was also wondering whether we could somehow arrange for a fundraiser to help the Footy Club obtain their digital scoreboard by alternate means, if the council are unable to provide the funding themselves. Any ideas on what we can do as a community to help them achieve this?**

***From Dick Davies, President WCA to Mel Blaser, 16 January 2010:***

Dear Mel,

Thank you for your informative letter dated 1 January 2010 re potential health hazards from the proposed Vodafone Tower. WCA exists to raise members' concerns and provide a forum for debate on issues of public interest. I attach a membership form for your consideration if you are not already subscribed.

We are aware of the proposal included in the reserve management plan and that potential EME (Electro Magnetic Energy) emissions are a cause for concern with some residents and some scientists. WCA has not campaigned on this issue as the current technical consensus appears to be that potential risk is negligible. This view may of course change if substantial evidence to

the contrary becomes available. It does appear that there has been limited public debate on this issue.

If you send me an electronic copy of your letter I will circulate it to WCA committee members and am prepared to lodge it on the website (with your permission) raising issues from the membership. I would be interested to have a copy of or reference to any peer reviewed scientific evidence that you have including the neurosurgeon report mentioned in your letter. I am aware of the concerns expressed by Lyn McLean of EMR Australia (30 August 2008) on Scribd and also note that she is she is a member of Department of Health's EME (Electro Magnetic Energy) Reference Group, hosted by ARPANSA (The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency). However, ARPANSA does not appear to endorse her concerns as their website states *'There is no clear evidence in the existing scientific literature that the use of mobile telephones poses a long-term public health hazard (although the possibility of a small risk cannot be ruled out)'*. ARPANSA is however currently coordinating a survey of environmental radio frequency electromagnetic energy (RF EME) levels arising from mobile phone base station antennas.

The union site [www.ohsrep.org.au/index.cfm](http://www.ohsrep.org.au/index.cfm) takes a slightly less sanguine view *'Industry and Government maintain that there is no risk from the weak levels of radiation from mobile phone towers. However, there is still concern over whether even small exposures can cause cancer and other conditions. Some studies have shown that EMFs can cause changes in cellular structure, changes to brain patterns, etc. There remains a lack of consensus among the experts about whether and at what levels electric magnetic fields and electromagnetic radiation can affect humans.'*

Of course, advocates one way or the other will cherrypick these data to support whatever their view is, consequently a considered meta study would be desirable. I was not able to reference it on the Cochrane medical review database which is a sound source on health issues. If you are aware of other sources I would be interested to access it.

WCA will be attending the meeting with Councillors on 11 February and also have another meeting with Manningham Council scheduled for February some time. WCA will certainly put this on the agenda to gain their latest view. We will also be prepared to convene a public forum to debate the issue if matters are not resolved by these other meetings. I have also discussed it with Councillor David Ellis who is very willing to discuss it with you and bring you up to date with Council's response. His contact details are 03 9844 5135 and [davidellis9@bigpond.com](mailto:davidellis9@bigpond.com).

**Kind Regards**

**Dick Davies**

***From Mel Blaser, local resident to WCA, 10 February 2010:***

Dear Dick

Thank you for your time yesterday, and for re-forwarding your email of 16th January.

Please find attached a copy of my letter to the WCA as requested. You do have my permission to circulate to all WCA committee members and may also publish on your website if you so wish. It would be great to get a discussion going within the WCA on this critical issue.

I have also attached a copy of the Science Direct Surgical Neurology Report on Cell Phones and Brain Tumours, as requested. It's a lengthy report, but well worth the read. All Mullum Mullum Ward councillors (and the Mayor, Cr Charles Pick) have been given a copy of this report back on the 14th December, 2009. As you will read in the conclusion, the neurosurgeons who compiled this report believe **"that the aforementioned epidemiologic and laboratory findings underscore the need for reassessment by governments worldwide of cell phone and also mast radiation exposure standards, and the usage and deployment of this technology."** Owing to this, I believe it would be an act of negligence for council to approve an application for a mobile phone tower in such a built up area. Surely, where there is documented evidence-based concern from the neurological community as to the safety of these towers, we should be erring on the side of caution and placing them at a considerable distance away from areas such as kindergartens, schools, shops, sporting clubs and residents. Vodafone could not have chosen a more Community Sensitive location, as this tower would be in close proximity to all of these sites.

Also, as I mentioned to you yesterday, this proposed tower is a Joint Venture tower owned by two carriers, Vodafone and Optus, which, by Vodafone's own admission, will emit even greater levels of EMR (as it will be servicing more phones, and therefore, the 'traffic' will be far greater - more traffic = more emissions).

In relation to the emergency services issue, according to Vodafone and Optus coverage maps, Warrandyte is already well covered within the 2G mobile phone service, which allows for phone calls and SMS text messages to be readily transmitted. This would mean that in an emergency situation, all residents who currently use Vodafone or Optus as their mobile phone carrier are already able to receive fire alerts via SMS without any problems. It appears, therefore, that this proposed 3G installation is purely aimed at commercial gain through the ability to provide high speed broadband internet data services, such as internet browsing, and has nothing to do with enhancing coverage in an emergency situation.

It would be great if you could table this letter at the meeting this evening, and discuss this further with council.

Again, I thank you for your time, and look forward to meeting with you tomorrow night @ the Ward meeting.

Kind Regards,

Melinda Blaser

***From Dick Davies, President WCA to Mel Blaser, 14 February 2010:***

Dear Mel,

Thank you for your email and attachments. My take home message from the Manningham Councillors Ward Meeting on Thursday 11 February was that there is a large measure of public concern over the Vodafone/Optus Tower and that Council will extend the period of consultation and hold a public meeting of concerned residents. If that is the case the WCA need not get directly involved. If that does not eventuate or is unsatisfactory then WCA will be happy to convene a forum to take it further. However, I do think that Council is now taking your concerns seriously.

Thanks also for the health paper by Khurana et al. My reading of this paper is that:

1. The data and meta analysis presented establishes a statistically valid link between long term (ten years) cell phone usage and an increase in certain brain tumours, doubling the risk.
2. They link this causally to US data which shows an increase in cell phone usage and an increase in CNS tumours from ~13 to ~18 per 100,000 over a ten year period.
3. They cite laboratory data of tumours and DNA fragmentation in animals and cells caused by low level electro magnetic radiation (EMR).
4. Whilst their conclusion links EMR from base towers with cell phones, no evidence is presented to support that claim. Neither is the claim repeated in the abstract. (The timing and nature of such exposure differs considerably between the two).
5. The paper does not present any data relating their results to accepted 'Threshold Limit Values' (TLV), i.e. the amount of exposure that can be tolerated in a particular situation over a period of time. Occupational Safety and Health and Industrial Hygiene TLVs usually have wide safety margins.

These data suggest that caution is required on cell phone usage, particularly in children who may be exposed over a long period at a formative stage. However, information is also needed on the emission levels from modern cell phones, are they lower than in those examined in these historical studies? (A question for Vodafone perhaps?). Exposure at high doses in laboratory conditions whilst indicative, is not in itself sufficient to condemn a product. Most of the products under my kitchen sink would be detrimental under that sort of lab testing (chlorine in bleach, phenol in disinfectant etc.). ARPANSA quotes a large number of references in its draft radiation standard including ~150 epidemiological studies that, whilst variable in results, overall give little cause for alarm. Consequently this paper raises questions about cell phones but is entirely speculative about base towers.

In contrast, ARPANSA publish actual Australian data of radiation levels measured at named base tower sites in Australia relative to the general public exposure limit (TLV). I attach a cut and paste of these data (available on the ARPANSA website). These data show that in 16 sites measured, low level

electromagnetic radiation levels are less than 1% of the Australian standard in 15 cases and slightly over 1% in one other. In other words, there is a 100% safety margin below the established standard, which already has an additional built in safety margin. Experimental data would need to demonstrate that the proscribed TLV is grossly overestimated. It does not do this.

Consequently, at this stage, I would not express alarm over emissions from a base tower. The environmental and aesthetic effect may be a different matter. However, it is true to say that mobile coverage in Warrandyte is patchy, I cannot receive Optus in the Community Centre for example, whatever the published network maps maintain. Given the importance of early warning and use of SMS for bushfire emergency, there is an upside to the tower. WCA is concerned that the tactic of offering support to the sports clubs of a scoreboard on the Tower was deliberately designed to divide community opinion in the event of a backlash. We encourage Council to cover the cost of any scoreboard and judge the Tower on its merits.

I am happy to publish your letter and concerns on the WCA website and welcome debate on the issue.

**Kind Regards**  
**Dick Davies**  
**President**  
**Warrandyte Community Association Inc.**  
**[www.warrandyte.org.au](http://www.warrandyte.org.au)**

## Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency ARPANSA Base Station Survey

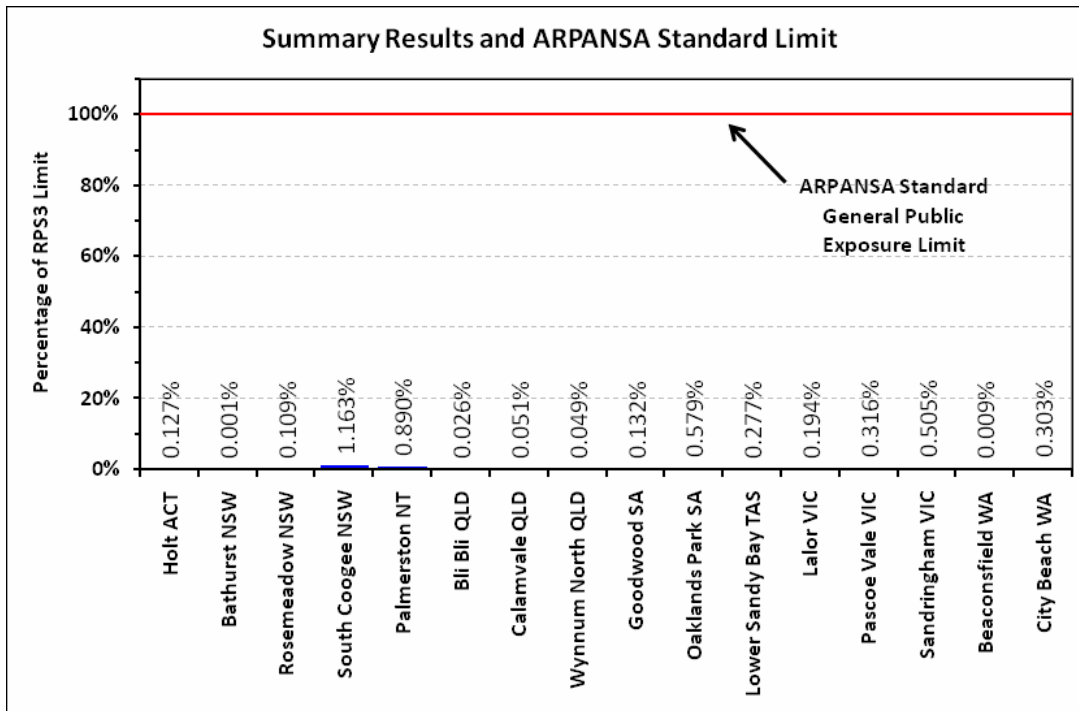
**ARPANSA is currently coordinating a survey of environmental radio frequency electromagnetic energy (RF EME) levels arising from mobile phone base station antennas.**

Ref: <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/RadiationProtection/BaseStationSurvey/index>.

**Background information** on the survey methodology and purpose is available using the navigation links on the website.

### Summary Results

<u>Suburb/Town</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Date Measured</u>	<u>RF Level</u> (% of exposure limits)
<a href="#">Calamvale</a>	Corner of Beaudesert & Compton Roads	QLD	October 2009	0.051%
<a href="#">Palmerston</a>	65 Chung Wah Terrace	NT	October 2009	0.890%
<a href="#">Wynnum North</a>	14 Mungala Street	QLD	October 2009	0.052%
<a href="#">Holt</a>	Playing Fields, Ormsby Place	ACT	August 2009	0.127%
<a href="#">Lalor</a>	320 Station Street	VIC	May 2009	0.194%
<a href="#">Lower Sandy Bay</a>	Sandown Park, Long Point Road	TAS	May 2009	0.277%
<a href="#">Pascoe Vale</a>	Rayner Reserve, Devon Road	VIC	Apr 2009	0.316%
<a href="#">City Beach</a>	Lot 245 Kilpa Court	WA	Dec 2007	0.303%
<a href="#">Oaklands Park</a>	Warradale Barracks	SA	Dec 2007	0.579%
<a href="#">Beaconsfield</a>	20 Moran Street	WA	Nov 2007	0.009%
<a href="#">Bli Bli</a>	Whitecross Road	QLD	Nov 2007	0.026%
<a href="#">Bathurst</a>	230 Howick Street	NSW	Oct 2007	<0.001%
<a href="#">Rosemeadow</a>	Lot 1 Appin Road	NSW	Oct 2007	0.109%
<a href="#">South Coogee</a>	175 Malabar Road	NSW	Sep 2007	1.163%
<a href="#">Goodwood</a>	147 Goodwood Road	SA	Aug 2007	0.132%
<a href="#">Sandringham</a>	48 Bay Road	VIC	Apr 2007	0.505%



For mobile telecommunications frequencies, the relevant standard enforced in Australia is the [Radiation Protection Standard for Maximum Exposure Levels to Radiofrequency Fields – 3kHz to 300GHz](#) (also called RPS3 or simply the [ARPANSA Standard](#)). At the frequencies considered in this study, the exposure limits it specifies are equivalent to those of the 1998 Guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

These limits have been determined on the basis of established health effects and include safety margins. They are designed to protect all members of the public including those sometimes thought to be particularly vulnerable (the elderly, the infirm, pregnant women and children).