

# Electromagnetic Radiation

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## AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION COMMUNICATIONS

*The Australian Democrats support the creation of a modern, efficient communications system for all Australians that does not adversely affect the health of the public. The Democrats believe that there should be greater regulation, community consultation and monitoring of health risks associated with telecommunications.*

### Our Action Plan

- Base EMR exposure standards for mobile phones and transmitters according to the findings of current scientific studies which suggest they should be more stringent;
- Require all transmitters to be subject to local government planning and approval processes and adopt uniform requirements for safe siting;
- Keep EMR from base stations at lowest practical levels;
- Label phones with EMR levels and warning of the health risks;
- Ban advertising for mobile phones that target children;
- Require the Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing to report on the rise of illnesses such as diabetes and Alzheimer's and other non-fatal conditions such as hearing loss, autism and ADHD in the general population.

### The Issues

While radio waves and other forms of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) have been in use for decades, the recent dramatic increase in the use of mobile phones, 3G and wireless broadband technology and the proliferation of transmission towers have led to widespread concern about safety.

In Australia and elsewhere there is a long-running dispute over the adequacy of existing radiofrequency standards. Studies show that radio and microwave frequency radiation can disrupt biological systems in ways that could not be attributed to the heat generated by equipment. A range of experts agree that it is still not possible to say that exposure to radio frequency radiation, even at levels below international guidelines, is without potential adverse health effects. Indeed, it has recently been indicated that a number of health issues predicted by the experts 10 years ago are now rapidly on the increase.



Other ACTION PLANS are available online at  
[www.democrats.org.au](http://www.democrats.org.au)

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Concerns have been raised that, given the potential risks, mobile phone towers should not be situated near sensitive areas such as kindergartens, day care centres, schools and Aged care facilities. Many communities are also requesting that they be situated away from residential areas.

A carrier authorised under federal legislation to install a low impact antenna is immune from State and Territory laws, including town planning and environmental laws.

The Democrats have campaigned for 10 years on this issue, particularly in relation to health effects and environmental issues.

In 2003, the Democrats moved an amendment that will give the Australian Communication Authority, upon application from a carrier for a permit, the power to reject the siting of mobile phone towers adjacent to community sensitive sites without community approval.

Democrats also called for ear piece accessories to be sold with every new mobile phone.

In 2001, the Democrats initiated an inquiry into the health effects of EMR on public health which reported in 2001. See:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita\\_ctte/completed\\_inquiries/1999-02/emr/report/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/completed_inquiries/1999-02/emr/report/index.htm).

The Democrats won \$4.5 million in funding for research and public information.

IN 1997 we moved an amendment to legislation which would have banned mobile phone towers within 200 metres of schools hospitals, child care centres and aged care facilities. This amendment was opposed by the Government and the ALP.

The Democrats also opposed the low impact provisions in the Federal Government's 1997 legislation which left telecommunications carriers with extraordinary powers to commandeer buildings and sites for the roll-outs.



## CONTACT US

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