

Review: C564:2011 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Industry Code

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding the review of the above Code.

I note that the prime mission of the Communications Alliance is “to promote the growth of the Australian communications industry and the protection of consumer interests by fostering the highest standards of business ethics and behaviour through industry self-governance.”

While this code is drafted by the communications industry itself there remains no likelihood that public interests will be honoured where they might conflict with industry aims. The current situation is that the public may be informed about plans to build telecommunication facilities in their neighbourhoods, but they have no power of veto. Whatever the condition of people near those towers, they are exposed to radiofrequencies. Some are already sensitised to this form of radiation and suffer greatly as a result. Others may be young, ill or pregnant and the now numerous research studies independently conducted on the effects of radiofrequency radiation indicate these people may be harmed by this exposure. The coming 5G is likely to expose people even more. There are already many people adversely affected by the location of telecommunication towers.

There are also those members of the public who complain about the visual impact of proposed tall towers and who succeed in getting these towers built to a lower height. This then means added radiation for the surrounding homes, with less visual impact but more health impact. This needs to be taken into account when responding to public requests. I believe the health of the public should take priority over visual impact.

Having the communications industry itself draft the code involves a conflict of interest in terms of the public good. For any code to truly represent public interests it needs to be formulated and drafted by community members without ties to the telecommunication industries. As long as this is not the case I do not believe the Alliance can protect consumer interests and thereby fulfil its mission.

Paula Polson