

Subject: Telecommunications Bill
Date: Monday, 28 November 2011 5:31:26 PM

Secretary of the House Communications Committee

Dear Secretary,

Thank you so much for allowing me to resubmit my comments - see below - in support of the Wilkie Bill on Telecommunications. I inadvertently sent it to the wrong address - my apologies.

John Williamson

1 November, 2011

Dear Members of the House Communications Committee,

I support the changes in this Bill to the Telecommunications Act because they allow community discussion and wider community notification of such towers.

In my area of Sandy Bay, Hobart, Optus and Telstra have proposed a tower to be built in a busy shopping and residential area. These companies letter-boxed very few local citizens and yet this was meant to be their public consultation. With so many people who will be affected by the construction, placement and use of this tower, it is very disappointing that the companies did not consult more widely or more openly.

Those local citizens who did manage to find out about the tower, then had great difficulty convincing Optus and Telstra that the vast bulk of local citizens did not want their tower in that location and that had they consulted more broadly a more suitable site could have been found. Our concerns about the site, which is on top of the Woolworths Supermarket, is in a very heavily populated suburban area with – as Optus admitted – no real need for any improvement to mobile phone coverage. It would be a very large feature, it would be close to two schools and three doctors surgeries and a busy shopping centre. Some recent studies have shown a 300% increased risk of cancer over five years for those who live closer than 400 metres to these towers. For those who work everyday close to the tower they will also be vulnerable due to the constant emission of EMR.

What is more Woolworths do not want this tower because of concerns about the health of their staff working so close to a large tower of this sort and also because of concerns regarding future litigation regarding Electro-Magnetic Radiation: but even

they were not able overcome the power of the Telecommunications companies!

We were very disappointed too, that the companies felt that because under the law they have a free hand to place these towers wherever they wanted to regardless of community unhappiness, they felt immune to the communities feelings and have gone ahead with their planning in spite of widespread community opposition. Surely this is not good policy and obviously these are companies who do want to be good corporate citizens!

The changes recommended by Mr Wilkie's Bill will make the Telcos a little more accountable and sensitive to community feelings and it will make communities more supportive of Optus and Telstra's siting of towers in future.

John Williamson

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