

Dr John French

11-Nov-11

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

Letter of Support for the Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011

To whom it may concern,

I write to give my support for the proposed amendment bill following my recent experience with the development application for a telecommunications tower near my home in Tinderbox, Tasmania.

In this case the following points are relevant to the discussion of this bill:

1. There was entirely insufficient notification. We received no notification from Telstra or the Kingborough Council at all about the development of this high impact, highly visible (35 metre galvanised lattice tower) even though our house lies within 300 metres of the development site.
2. There was insufficient time to lodge objection to the development application with council. Residents on neighbouring properties were notified only because of a boundary easement setback requirement in the development application and given only 14 days to respond. Extraordinary efforts were required by local residents to notify the surrounding community, understand the application and its impacts (on visual amenity, cultural heritage, protected species, electromagnetic radiation, property values and other issues) and lodge appropriate objections to council that were acceptable under the current planning scheme. This effort required considerable time off work and expenses to seek appropriate information and advice.
3. In this case, of a high impact tower sited on private land, I was very concerned over the limitations on local council and state government in the planning process and the limited rights of appeal by residents (for example there is no right of appeal on the grounds of the health effects of continuous electromagnetic

radiation exposure). I strongly support greater local control over the approvals process and greater rights of appeal for neighbours in regard to high visual impact installations.

4. It was also apparent in the Tinderbox case that the site objected to was a cheaper alternative to a site already approved by council, which was further from homes and received no objection. It was very clear that commercial interests were held higher than any regard for the impacts on the local community in this case.

While I recognise the importance of telecommunications infrastructure and I am not anti-development I seek your consideration of these issues in regard to the proposed Amendment Bill and urge stronger local community consultation on new telecommunication infrastructure developments.

Yours Sincerely,

John French