

Telecommunications Universal Service Obligation Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Productivity Commission's draft report, dated November 2016, in respect of the above inquiry.

I am one of many people with EHS, who cannot use a mobile phone or have wifi or a wifi compatible modem in my home. I live in a fire-prone area and need access to a safe mode of communication for emergencies, and for normal daily contact. I believe the Australian government has a duty of care to its citizens to ensure their basic communication needs are met safely and effectively. The growing percentage of people with EHS need the security and accessibility of landlines at home and via payphones, without wifi. Those of us who cannot use mobile phones need access to phones we can safely use away from home in case of emergencies. EHS is a disability, and as with other disabilities, those who suffer it should be aided to live as normal a life as possible. Telephone communication is a necessity for safety and emergencies, and one of the ways of alleviating the isolation many people with EHS are forced to endure.

Sensitivity to the radiofrequencies transmitted by mobile phones, their towers, smart meters, wifi and other such devices is hard for the average person to fathom. To bring it a little closer I will describe my situation in brief. Through my work I was over-exposed to microwaves, then a mobile phone tower was erected about 300 meters from my home. I moved, having developed an auto-immune disease. In my next house I was healthy until a smart meter was installed. My symptoms included palpitations, insomnia, confusion, anxiety, fatigue, weird feelings in my head, vision, digestive and circulatory problems, and others. I soon found I was affected by mobile phones. As I cannot be near people with mobile phones on, it means I cannot sit in a doctors' waiting room or go to meetings or classes. Movies, theatres and other gathering places are difficult. Due to being unable to tolerate wifi also I cannot go to some government buildings or even the homes of friends, whose husbands may use wifi for work. Many health professionals have wifi at their workplaces. I cannot fly any more or use public transport, due to wifi and mobiles. If I travel somewhere by car, where do I stay at the other end? Most places have wifi. Standing in a queue is often impossible as people tend to play with their phones. Even on a bushwalk in a group, I have had to turn back as I was affected by a phone tower a few hundred meters away. Asking others to please turn off their phones - even friends or family - is embarrassing and feels like an imposition. So one becomes more isolated, making landline phones and the internet one of the few safe and reliable ways of communicating.

The standards set by ARPANSA for the protection of Australian citizens from non-ionizing radiation are outdated and proven by thousands of scientific studies to be inadequate. They do not cover non-thermal effects nor the effects of multiple sources of microwave radiation, or of long term exposure. Their safety standards also fall far behind those of many other countries, which evidently take more notice of the science or perhaps care more about the health of their citizens.

Those of us with EHS could be seen to be the canaries in the coalmine, based on the many research studies indicating the long term health risks of pulsed radio-frequency radiation to humans and other species. The money saved by wireless/ microwave technology in the short term could well be vastly exceeded by consequent health care costs in the long term. Even forgetting research, it is a matter of common sense that our bodies and those of other species would be affected adversely by constant immersion in pulsed radiation millions of times stronger than the natural ambience of our environment. Humans and other life forms are electrical and operate via tiny precise electrical signals and impulses, which cannot be discreet from the environment. Rates of suicide, violence, allergies, autism, auto-immune disease, cancer, degenerative disease and other maladies have skyrocketed in the past 2 decades, since the advent of the mobile phone. The human body usually heals

at night while sleeping. However since smart meters on homes, there is no time when the body is not bombarded with alien frequencies and pulses, confusing natural rhythms.

The other factor which should provide reason for caution before abandoning landlines, is that of security and reliability. Wireless technology can be easily hacked or interfered with by weather events, causing potential chaos, disruption and even risks to national security.

Too often far- reaching decisions are made based on short term expedience, or the direction of an already rolling stream. Here we need more than that. We need vision that goes beyond the already formed projectory. And the courage to take a stand.

In summary: The request is made here for the continuation of landlines for the sake of not only the health and safety of those with EHS, but for the health of the general population; for long-term economic reasons; and for reliability and safety of communication lines.

Yours sincerely,

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