

Phone tower cancer fears

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/phone-tower-cancer-fears/2006/05/11/1146940676777.html>

source : www.emfacts.com

A SPATE of brain tumours among staff has forced RMIT University to close part of its business school and test for radiation emissions from rooftop phone towers.

As staff reacted with shock, the university yesterday shut the top two floors of the Bourke Street building and ordered more than 100 employees to work from home for the next fortnight.

The closure follows the discovery of five brain tumours in the past month and two others in 1999 and 2001. Two were malignant and five were benign.

WorkCover has launched an investigation and RMIT has promised its own inquiry.

The academics' union last night expressed concern that the tumours were caused by the communications towers on the roof of the former Tivoli Theatre site.

National Tertiary Education Union state secretary Matthew McGowan warned that anecdotal reports from hastily arranged staff meetings yesterday suggested the number of people affected would grow.

"You have to ask some pretty serious questions and we're obviously concerned that it could be linked to the tower," he said.

"This would appear to be much more than coincidence and RMIT has a responsibility to leave no stone unturned in seeking the truth."

Five of the seven affected work on the top floor of the 17-storey building. All except one have worked in the building for at least a decade.

An RMIT academic who did not want to be named said staff — the 16th and 17th floors are home to offices of senior management and lecturers — were *"in disbelief, concerned and upset"* as they attended meetings and left the building late yesterday.

Medical experts contacted by The Age said no definitive link had been proved between mobile phone tower radiation and cancer.

Australian Medical Association president Mukesh Haikerwal said there was no proof of a connection but *"if you get clusters of disease it's sensible to investigate."*

Dr John Gall, from private health company Southern Medical Services, which has been called in to assess the sick, said last night three of those affected had tumours showing symptoms consistent with radiation.

But he said there was no causal link with the building based on preliminary observations.

A spokesman for state Health Minister Bronwyn Pike said WorkCover would investigate the matter and the Department of Human Services would provide any expertise needed.

RMIT chief operating officer Steve Somogyi said testing was carried out on the building after the first two of the seven tumours were reported in 1999 and 2001. It found radiation and air quality levels within recommended guidelines.

"We value the health and safety of our staff and students very highly. The incidence of illness is disturbing and we shall continue to check for any possible cause connected to the building," Mr Somogyi said.

But RMIT union branch president Jeanette Pierce said the university agreed to shut the two floors only after being pressured by the union. *"I'm a bit mystified that the university wasn't planning to vacate and that we had to make the point that they needed to vacate those two floors,"* she said.

There are more than 160 mobile phone towers in central Melbourne alone. A Telstra spokeswoman said last night the company had two towers at the Tivoli site, but both met health and safety standards and were tested regularly.

"An enormous amount of medical research has been conducted without any substantiated evidence of a link between mobile phone technology and adverse health effects, including cancer," she said.

RMIT management emailed all staff and students late yesterday and said health check-ups and counselling would be made available. About 600 staff work in the building.

Mr McGowan said shutting the two floors should be just the first step. *"We think they should be testing all staff who have worked on those levels and not just for tumours. We need to understand what are the health risks that people are suffering,"* he said.

A help line for students and family members is available on 1800155 945.

Tanya Stoianoff, the executive director of the Mobile CarriersForum, which represents mobile phone companies, said there was no credible scientific evidence of health effects from living or working near a mobile phone base station.

[Important comments on the RMIT cell tower case](#)

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Filed under: [Cell phone news](#)

Following a message I sent out on the **bioelectromagnetics list** on the RMIT building controversy, several comments were posted that are quite relevant to the case and dispute the understanding that being directly underneath a cellphone antenna facility means the RF/MW levels are minimal. As one technician said to me just yesterday: *"If you have a cell phone antenna on the roof of a building, the safest place to be is below"*.

That apparently is not the case....

Don

1) From Charles Claessens:

"Christian Bornkessel did some measurements in Germany and found that beneath (also inside houses and under) mobile phone masts, there was substantial HF radiation, and in the order of the Swiss emission values."

Download the report at:

<http://www.milieuziektes.nl/Pagina112d.html>

2) From Jean-Pierre Lentin:

"This is the familiar "misconception" (or blatant lie) propagated by the cell phone operators. In my experience as a science writer specialising in bio-electromagnetics, I've been told many times by certified experts

(sometimes working for the phone companies - but recently retired) that every time they had to measure emissions from cell phone relays on the floor below (supposedly the "safest place"), exposition was much higher than predicted by calculations. The causes are unclear - under-estimation of secondary lobe, reflections by metallic structures or other synergistic effects, but the fact is clear : the floor below is definitely not a safe place !"

3) From Paul Doyon:

"I've heard this too but it is not what my HF meter tells me. I have recorded extremely high readings below (street level) from where these antennas are positioned - in Japan at any rate."

4) From Yasmin Skelt (Mast Sanity, U.K.):

"The Big Lie - the Mobile Phone Industry promotes the "lighthouse beam" lie that the radiation goes away from the building. This was re-enforced by a stupid diagram some years ago (I think in the Stewart Report) that showed a "lighthouse beam" of radiation from a mast. However that is the intensity of the beam in that diagram is AVERAGED over 10 minutes. The Telstra diagram from years ago showing a mad zigzag pattern is correct. I have stood underneath masts and in buildings with my COM Monitor and got readings, no problem. Campaigners usually don't have the expensive equipment to take readings, but even when we did it is ignored by the authorities. In the UK Alasdair Phillips has done readings inside buildings - he has found that sure enough the EMFs soaks through to the top floor. Here we have antennae on top of tower blocks, usually owned by councils who have low income tenants. When these tenants complain of health effects they are just ignored as the councils don't want the hassle and also don't want to re-house them or be taken to court.

Sealing off floors when someone becomes ill is the common response in the UK - it is now happening in Australia. Get a spectrum analyser with a true independent EMF consultant as soon as possible - use an axe to get access to those floors. My guess is that the antennae is blasting out far further than the Operators have told the landlords."

Best wishes, Yasmin Skelt

5) From Robert Reidlinger:

"There is another aspect to consider in the matter of the RMIT cell tower case, which I have not seen mentioned. (Reflection from nearby buildings or even a reflector dish) Like sunlight, Radio signals can be reflected. Satellite TV dishes are a good example. The RF rays are collected by the dish and reflected back to a pickup cone which diverts the gathered higher density signal to the TV set. Milt Bowling discovered the refraction theory with cellphone towers, while attending a metering program by Health Canada at school sights in Vancouver BC.

I have also found high readings of EMF directly below cellphone towers in Canada.

Also to be considered are the cables that run from the transformer to the antenna. If these cables are not well insulated the EMF's can escape into the building."

Regards Robert

6) From Milt Bowling:

"Recently, I took Dr. Magda Havas to a firehall in Richmond, B.C., Canada to measure radiation from a large tower on the roof. Her meters were accurate and directional. The readings up on the roof, right under the tower were huge, as they also were on the top floor under

a skylight. The myth of "the safest place to be is right under the tower" continues to be perpetuated by the wireless industry. Others would be "the power is too low to cause adverse health effects" and "the cheque is in the mail"."

cheers,

Milt

7) From Panayis Zambellis (UK):

"I have been following the top floor story and the strength of the hypothesis that below these antennas is the safest place. I live immediately below (60 feet away) from a tall tower having pagers Tetra 2G and 3G and having taken measurements (with com monitor) can confirm that the levels are certainly not minimal (at least 1-2.5 V/M)

As a licensed radio ham I have made my own antennas on 2 metres 145 mhz and 70 cms 440 mhz and have a practical understanding of emission patterns and side lobes. Low gain antennas as well as high gain antennas have significant side lobe patterns which are fractions of the main beam intensity but if in close proximity of possible health significance. I therefore find interesting the comments from Charles Claessens and Jean Pierre Lentin citing case studies suggesting similar findings to my observations.

Perhaps it might be interesting for the sake of research that measurements be made on the this particular top floor to obtain some working values on the intensity and mix of frequencies."

all the best

Panayis Zambellis Luton UK

8) From Katharina Gustavs:

"As we all know, cancer is a multifactorial phenomenon and is rarely associated with a single environmental factor. As far as the EMR exposure levels in the RMIT building are concerned, it would be great if someone would dare measure all frequency bands across the entire electromagnetic spectrum with sufficiently sensitive equipment, taking peak values and not averaging over, for example, 6 minutes.

In addition, it would be very beneficial to know what EMR exposure levels people with a brain tumor have at home where they sleep. And then it might become very interesting to also test bedrooms of people who worked at the RMIT for a long time and did not develop a brain tumor. During deep sleep humans have a great opportunity to repair their immune system, especially if plenty of melatonin is released at night. If this marvelous self-repair process is interfered with, we are much more prone to disease.

Are there testing results from the previous investigation available to the public?

I certainly hope that the scientists entrusted with this investigation do not limit themselves to only checking the compliance with official exposure guidelines, but have a "broadpectrum" look at the situation and help us learn more about environmental settings and brain health."

Katharina Gustavs
Building Biology Consultant