

09 SEP 2019

Michael Vaughan
By email: fyi-request-10952-8424efef@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H201907199

Dear Mr Vaughan

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request of under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for information on the Interagency Committee on the Health Effects of Non-Ionising Fields (the Committee).

A copy of your full request including information held by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) to your queries is outlined in Appendix 1.

As you may be aware, the Ministry convenes the Committee to monitor and review research on the health effects of electromagnetic fields. You can find copies of recent reviews considered by the Committee on radiofrequency fields publicly available from the Ministry website at the following address: <https://health.govt.nz/our-work/environmental-health/non-ionising-radiation/research-non-ionising-radiation>.

The Committee reports to the Director-General of Health but also periodically prepares a report for the Ministers of Health, Environment and Business, Innovation and Employment to provide them with background information and a current summary of key research findings. These reports are also publicly available from the Ministry website at: <https://health.govt.nz/publication/interagency-committee-health-effects-non-ionising-fields-report-ministers-2018>.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made on this request.

Please note this response (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Ministry of Health website.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Woodley
Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention

Appendix 1

#	Requested information	Response
1	<i>Who are the current members of this committee?</i>	<p>I have decided to withhold information in response to these parts of your request under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect personal privacy. I have considered the countervailing public interest, and I do not believe that it outweighs the decision to withhold the information under this request.</p> <p>As you may be aware, the Committee membership includes representatives from government, industry, academic and consumer groups. Further information on the composition of the Committee can be found in the publicly available terms of reference: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/radiation-safety/non-ionising-radiation/research-non-ionising-radiation.</p> <p>Additionally, the Ministry does not usually release names of members as these often change, and the members represent their organisation (unlike most committees where the person is there for their specific expertise).</p>
2	<i>Which of these members has been employed by (or contracted by) a telecommunications company?</i>	
3	<i>What is the process whereby these individuals become members of this committee?</i>	<p>The sectors and government agencies represented on the Committee are invited by the Director-General of Health. Government agencies and industry sectors nominate their own representatives, but representatives for other sectors are approached by the Ministry on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the area and ability to represent the sector.</p>
4	<i>When making decisions about non-ionising radiation, e.g. Safety Standards, from what other sources does the Ministry of Health access information?</i>	<p>You can find links to many of the significant review papers that guide the Ministry's policy and advice on its website at (www.health.govt.nz) by searching 'research into non-ionising radiation'.</p>
5	<i>How many members of the committee have qualifications in Biology to enable them to adequately advise the Ministry of Health about possible effects of non-ionising radiation at cellular level?</i>	<p>Please refer to response to questions 1 and 2.</p>

#	Requested information	Response
6	<p><i>Has the Ministry of Health been informed by the Advisory Committee that France has banned wi-fi in pre-school centres and restricted its usage in primary schools...and has the Ministry of Health taken any steps to find out the reasons for this, in the interests of the safety of children in New Zealand?</i></p>	<p>The Ministry received a briefing paper on WiFi in schools that covered measures taken in other countries, including France, in 2014.</p>
7	<p><i>What are the proposed frequencies for 5G and what research has been conducted into the safety of these particular frequencies of non-ionising radiation?</i></p>	<p>The Radio Spectrum management service of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment published a discussion document on 5G frequencies in 2018 and this and other material on 5G spectrum allocation is available www.rsm.govt.nz/projects-and-auctions/current-projects/preparing-for-5g-in-new-zealand/</p> <p>For information on health effects research please refer to the answer to question 4 and an information sheet on 5G and health available on the Ministry website at https://health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/environmental-health/radiation-environment/cellsites</p>