

Memo

To: Councillor Penny Hulse
Chair, Environment and Community Committee

Cc: Councillor Cathy Casey
Community Development and Safety Committee

From: Cath Handley
Chair, Waiheke Local Board

Date: 3 May 2019

Subject: Request to the Environment and Community Committee to investigate
the safety of 5G wireless technology

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to request that the Environment and Community Committee undertake an independent assessment of the safety of the current national radio frequency emission standards as they relate to the emissions proposed under 5G.

The board's request is that a **precautionary approach** should be adopted until evidence of effects is fully documented and well understood. Currently the public are sustaining a well-orchestrated major public campaign to embrace 5G technology without the complementary benefit of scientific review and political leadership on the issue.

The committee will be aware that a number of American jurisdictions and other cities/states/countries are currently reviewing their own approaches and many are stalling 5G's implementation as a consequence e.g.s Portland Oregon, San Francisco, Brussels, Florence, Netherlands, and possibly Germany.

Background

In Jan 2019, the Waiheke Local Board received a presentation from Mr Michael Fleck and his science advisor, Dr Sue Pockett (a neurophysiologist with 20 years'

experience in the field) on the rollout of the 5G wireless network and its potential impacts on human health.

Mr Fleck presented evidence of a link between non-ionising radio frequency emissions and human health effects. Mr Fleck stated that the proposed rollout of the 5G network would result in further saturation of the environment with radio frequency emissions at a frequency and intensity which is potentially more harmful to human health than current emissions. An article authored by Dr Pockett which was recently published in the journal of the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMJ) provides evidence of these health effects and is attached to this memo with further supporting information and links to current research.

This is a critical issue to address as under current provisions, if proposed cell sites emit at levels below the national standard, and is a permitted activity, no resource consent is required. Consequently a new technology can be imposed upon the people of Auckland, without a supporting evidence-base or any form of public consultation. As the largest and most densely populated city in the country, Auckland should take a leadership role in ensuring the safety of the proposed network, which is particularly relevant given Spark's intention to launch a live 5G network on 1 July 2020 for the Americas Cup in 2021.

Discussion

In response to Mr Fleck's deputation, the board requested a specialist report from council officers. However on 26 March 2019, it was advised by the Contamination, Air & Noise Specialist Unit of the Resource Consents Department, that council did not have the specific technical expertise required to provide such a report.

Since the matter is of region-wide significance, the board is requesting that the Environment and Community Committee seek the appropriate expert reports on the safety of the 5G rollout or request that the Ministry of Health do so and review the national standard if necessary.

The board does not have a pre-determined view of the outcome of such a review and indeed acknowledges the potential future economic and lifestyle opportunities of the 5G technology.

Recommendation

The Waiheke Local Board requests that the Environment and Community Committee takes a precautionary approach while it investigates the safety of the proposed rollout of 5G Wireless technology in the Auckland region and of the national radio frequency emissions standards, with a view to seeking the same approach and support from the government, or failing that, to adopting a more stringent Auckland standard.