

Mobile base invasion here

EXCLUSIVE
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Furore over phone transmitters in Aussie streets

THOUSANDS of space-age cell phone bases banned in Belgium and Switzerland are being installed on power poles outside Australian homes without residents' approval.

Councils and consumer groups are demanding the right to veto the mini mobile phone transmitters, which do not require planning permission to be placed near bedroom windows.

Telstra is refusing to reveal how many 5G base stations it has installed, but an analysis by *The Sunday Mail* of a telecommunications industry database shows at least 359 have mushroomed across Queensland this year – with hundreds more

**Is a 5G station near your home?
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in the pipeline. Optus and Telstra have installed 171 of the controversial transmitters within 20km of Brisbane's city centre, with 71 more on the Gold Coast and 24 near Toowoomba.

Telcos are required to notify residents, who can object but have no power to stop the

high-speed devices being installed outside their homes.

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network chief executive Teresa Corbin yesterday said residents should have the right to reject the equipment.

"There's going to be a lot of these base stations and if one's installed within a few feet of someone's window, it shouldn't just happen automatically," she said.

Councils have also complained that the technology can be installed without planning approval, as they are deemed to be "low impact" under the Telecommunications Act.

Australian Local Government Association president David O'Loughlin warned that a "proliferation" of base stations would "clutter the streetscape".

"Some councils have concerns about the potential health risks of 5G, exacerbated by their shorter range and therefore greater numbers," he said.

"As their range is shorter, telcos will need many more cell locations on towers, phone booths or power poles.

"Councils are seeking planning approvals to manage that proliferation."

The European Commission headquarters of Brussels, in

Belgium, and Geneva in Switzerland banned 5G technology this year.

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) yesterday insisted 5G was safe, with radiation on par to body scanning equipment.

"The exposures will be similar to things like police radar guns and airport screening units," ARPANSA assistant director Dr Ken Karipidis said yesterday.

Dr Karipidis said 5G could reduce people's exposure to radiation, by only targeting people with 5G phones.

"At the moment with (4G) base stations, everyone in its

line of sight gets exposed but 5G will be more selective.

"It's going to find your phone and form a beam with your phone, rather than exposing everyone in the vicinity," he said.

A critic of 5G, Brisbane radiation physicist Victor Leach of the Oceania Radio-frequency Scientific Advisory Association, called for more studies into the health impact of electromagnetic radiation.

"People don't want antennas outside their house and a few metres from their kids' bedrooms," he said.

Optus said yesterday it planned 1200 5G sites nationally by March, and Telstra said it expected to "increase our 5G coverage almost fivefold" over the next year.