

Position Statement

Follow-up Research on Brain tumours in Building 108 at RMIT

August 3rd, 2006

RMIT today released the findings of an independent review led by A/Prof LaMontagne (<http://mams.rmit.edu.au/g60adi0a81r3.pdf>), of recent investigations addressing an apparent brain tumour cluster occurring in the top two floors of their Business Studies building in Bourke St, Melbourne. The Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research (ACRBR) has been monitoring this issue closely due to initial concerns by RMIT staff that this 'reported cluster' may be related to telecommunications base stations on the roof of that building.

The LaMontagne review was summarized as concluding that 1/ there is no evidence of a brain tumour cluster, and 2/ there is no evidence of exposures at or above levels of concern for known or suspected occupational or environmental risk factors for brain cancer. The ACRBR has assessed this review, and believe that these conclusions are entirely appropriate.

Consistent with this conclusion, the ACRBR would emphasize the following:

1/ As pointed out by the LaMontagne Review, given the size and age of the workforce over those two floors, 7 cases of malignant tumour is about what would be expected based on the incidence of cancer in the Victorian population.

2/ Radiofrequency (RF) fields in publicly accessible areas in the vicinity of mobile phone base stations are exceedingly low and below Australian and International standards.

3/ Based on extensive investigation and consultation with research and community groups, the leading international health authority, the World Health Organisation (WHO) (see <http://www.who.int/peh-emf/about/en/>), has concluded that there is no evidence of an association between mobile phone base stations and adverse health effects.

4/ Investigation of apparent cancer clusters is rarely conclusive. Apart from well documented events such as exposure to ionising radiation from atomic blasts or catastrophic reactor leakages and contaminants such as asbestos, it is often difficult to identify an environmental

cause. Moreover, the cause of brain tumours is poorly understood (see <http://www.ncri.ie/cancerinfo/clusters.shtml>).

However, both the ACRBR and WHO agree there is a need for more research in certain areas to improve knowledge and better evaluate any possible health risk. In response to these concerns, the ACRBR has been funded by the Australian Government to conduct a wide-ranging program of research on neurological and behavioural aspects of mobile telephony, embracing epidemiological, human, animal and cellular studies. The ACRBR also specialises in the measurement and analysis of the absorption of energy from radio devices by biological systems, including humans.

For more information contact:

Associate Professor Rodney Croft

rcroft@swin.edu.au

+61 3 9214 5149