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## Community Update on 5G Northern Rivers

Admin have been working earnestly behind the scenes to formulate an action plan for preventing the rollout of 5G in the Byron Shire.

What can the community do to stop the rollout of 5G in the Byron Shire?

Nationally, communities have been successful at preventing mobile phone towers/ devices/ upgrades from being installed using Group Action. Group Action involves groups of people in the community who rally together to determine what's needed to physically prevent mobile phone infrastructure from being installed. Here are the steps:

- 1) Members can scan local newspapers for Telstra/ Optus/ Vodafone advertisements which notify the community of an imminent upgrade to a mobile phone tower or installation of a 'low impact' device (see example below - page 33 Byron Shire News).
- 2) When notification of a proposed installation is published, the public have 10 business days to submit an objection ([C564: 2018 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment](#))
- 3) At this time we will call out for people to door-knock on houses/ businesses close to the tower, explain to residents that a mobile phone tower 'upgrade' is proposed, how it will effect them, and request they sign a petition.
- 4) A letter will be drafted listing reasons we object to the proposed installation and we can collect as many signatures as possible from locals opposing the installation, including online petitions
- 5) We will submit the letter and the petition to 1) Justine Elliot/ Tamara Smith (a local MP) 2) Simon Richardson and counsellors 3) the telecommunications carrier proposing the installation
- 6) We wait for ten days for a reply
- 7) Hopefully we will receive a letter saying the installation isn't proceeding
- 8) If we are dissatisfied with the reply, or don't receive one, we can submit a complaint to the ACMA (Australia Communication and Media Authority).

Why do we need to take action now?

Telstra are advertising online, places in Australia where 5G is already active. You can click on the map links below to see where it is established:

<https://www.telstra.com.au/5g#gold-coast>

Most of the Gold Coast is already set up for 5G. I don't believe 5G is operating at the 300GHz frequencies which are harmful, but I believe the infrastructure is in place to allow the frequencies to be increased over time.

I have been informed that tower infrastructure is legally more difficult to remove, than to install.

Why do we need to take action in Byron now?

Telstra have confirmed that Nine (9) "remote radio units" are currently being installed at the Mobile Phone Base Station at 32 Fletcher Street Byron Bay to cope with Byron's "Peak demands" (see image below). This was advertised in the local paper, The Byron Shire News, on the 23rd May 2019 and two weeks were allocated for public comments or objections. No comments were received from public or council and devices have been deployed.

Why is this not good?

According to a [research paper by Cindy Lee Russell](#), executive Director of 'Physicians for Safe Technology' (US), 5G will "Not be a completely new technology, but a spectrum usage combination". In other words, Telstra will use all the existing infrastructure to rollout 5G which will be a 'mix of microwave frequencies' 'additive with blended architecture' 'an intergenerational mix of communications networks with 5G added later'.

If you don't want 5G to be rolled out in the Byron Shire, you don't want any more infrastructure deployed, as I believe it's all preparation for 5G.

What role does the Byron Shire Council play in all of this?

In most instances, Byron Council does not have the authority to stop the installation of 5G panels on existing towers or the installation of 4G and 5G small cells. However many Councils from around Australia are supporting their communities by:

- 1) writing letters to the communications Minister questioning community health impacts of 5G deployment (Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill)
- 2) calling on the Federal Government to intervene and suspend the rollout pending a review of the research related to mobile phone radiation and cancer (Randwick Council)
- 3) objecting to small cell deployment (Sutherlandshire Council)
- 4) objecting to new installations and voicing concerns of the local community to mobile phone companies (Moonee Valley Council)
- 5) objecting to new tower installation based on environmental and health impacts to the community (Victoria Park Council)
- 6) recommending a moratorium on the 5G rollout until independent scientific research proves 5G is safe for humans, wildlife and flora (Kiama Council)

In addition, Council can support the Byron community to object to Mobile Phone tower deployment. According to the rules that govern mobile phone tower installation ([C564: 2018 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment](#)) Council can:

- 1) request information from telecommunications carriers about forward project plans concerning deployment of mobile phone infrastructure (for "forward planning" purposes)
- 2) provide the community with the carrier's forward project plans concerning the deployment of Mobile Phone Radiocommunications Infrastructure

- 3) object to proposed mobile phone base station installations
- 7) contact relevant Ministers voicing community concerns about 5G technology
- 8) prevent the installation of infrastructure on Heritage listed buildings or areas of environmental significance
- 9) work with the community to prevent the rollout of 5G

What else did we uncover during our search?

1) Heritage listed buildings and areas of environmental significance are protected under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#). The [Telecommunications \(Low Impact Facilities\) Determination 2018](#) states that "a facility in an area of environmental significance cannot be low impact" (Clause 1.4); this includes places listed on a Commonwealth, State or Territory heritage register. Mobile phone carriers do not have a statutory power to upgrade/install facilities in areas of environmental significance and may be required to obtain local council approval (unless they are deemed to be complying developments under the *NSW State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 2007*).

2) In Byron Shire we currently have a mobile phone base station located at Lighthouse Beach Road, which sits in Cape Byron State Conservation area. By definition State Conservation areas are "protected for their natural or cultural significance". This tower currently houses seven antennae including 4GX ([RFNSA website](#)) which uses 'superior 700MHz spectrum that can go further than previous 4G frequencies'. Telecommunications carriers may require approval from Council to upgrade this tower in the future. We will request information/records from Council to find out more about the planning history of this tower.

3) The Paterson Street Water Tank currently houses eight antenna including 4GX and is on the [Heritage list](#) because it is a significant part of the 'infrastructure of the township of Byron Bay.' The hand painted murals on the tank were painted to commemorate the centenary of the birth of the Byron Bay township. These mobile phone antenna would likely have needed council approval to be installed. In addition, the water tank sits on the periphery of Arakwal National Park which is on the IUCN Green List of protected areas, co-managed by the local Aboriginal Byron Bay Arakwal people, an additional area of environmental significance in the Byron Shire.

4) I encourage the community to look through [Heritage listings](#) for Byron Shire and the Northern Rivers Region to locate other locations/buildings which may have cultural and historical significance and should not be flanked by mobile phone towers. Some people believe Byron Bay should be on the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#) for its 'outstanding landscape', 'area of exceptional natural beauty' its 'biological diversity' 'marine ecosystem' and 'outstanding representation of traditional culture'. This is something many residents of the Northern Rivers would like to see implemented to protect Byron Bay from 'environmental vulnerability under the impact of irreversible change'.

5) The [RFNSA website](#) lists all mobile phone towers operating in Byron Bay and around Australia. Currently, eleven Mobile Phone towers are listed under Byron Bay. Residents are concerned about the location of towers close to schools where children spend the majority of their week, and hospitals which accommodate people with illness, babies and the elderly. The Fletcher Street Tower (4GX) is located 400 metres from Byron Public School, and the Paterson Street (4GX) tower is 600

metres from Byron Public and 485 metres from Byron Preschool. The Tower in Ewingsdale (4G) is located 785 metres from the Cape Byron Steiner School. There is a Mobile phone tower (4G) on the Byron Hospital. Currently these towers emit 4G and 4GX frequencies, but could potentially be upgraded to 5G in the future.

If parents are concerned about the location of their child's school in relation to a mobile phone tower, it is recommended to request a representative from ORSAA or ECFSR to speak to your child's school principal. These organisations have prepared presentations and research which are currently in use to educate the community. It is advisable not to approach principals without this support.

How can the Community assist us to protest against the 5G Network?

- Join in the upcoming rally, protest, let the world know we oppose the rollout of 5G
- Scan the Byron Shire newspaper regularly for public notices of proposed installations published by telecommunications carriers and alert admin upon finding a notice
- Keep an eye out for "public notice" signs placed by telcos at tower sites and on locations where "small cells" can be installed, such as street lights, power poles and buildings (small cells can be installed on rooftops and sides of buildings) and notify admin
- Help us door knock and get petitions signed when we are preparing to object to installations
- Scour the Heritage website for buildings that should not house mobile phone towers or places of environmental significance and notify admin
- Help us fundraise to pay for flyers, advertisements, costs associated with the movement
- Donate money to the local ECFSR fund