



Infrastructure Deployment
Department of Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: powersandimmunities@communications.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission on the Proposed Changes to the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination and Telecommunications Code of Practice

Council appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission on the proposed changes to the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination and the Telecommunications Code of Practice to accommodate temporary communication towers. As an overall observation, Council understands the need for some form of temporary telecommunication facilities, but has concerns about the potential scale and the lack of locational and appearance criteria for what will be exempted from planning scheme regulation should the proposed changes be adopted.

The community of the Moreton Bay Region has the reasonable expectation that all development within the region should, at the very least, comply with the normal development requirements outlined in the MBRC planning scheme. The codes within the MBRC planning scheme set appearance and locational criteria for all telecommunications facilities, regardless of whether they are temporary or permanent. Naturally enough, those criteria vary depending upon the setting of the facility, its backdrop and the sensitivity of the surrounding environment. None of those aspects are addressed in the new exemptions that are proposed to be inserted in the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination, regardless of the setting for the facility.

It is also difficult to envisage that a tower of 30m or more in height could be regarded as a temporary facility. While the tower itself may be recoverable for potential reuse elsewhere, the significant foundations and service infrastructure required for such a facility would not.

The Locational Constraints

Of the four scenarios for which these temporary facilities are intended to be exempted, the “events” scenario and the “high demand holiday period” scenario will impose obvious locational constraints. Since the same foundation structure is likely to be used event after event and year after year, that structure needs to be in a position which allows ready access by heavy machinery on an ongoing and regular basis to

facilitate erection and removal of the tower. Effective mitigation of the adverse visual impact of a 30m tower is unlikely to be possible in such locations.

Appearance criteria for Other Exempted Facilities

Other exempted facilities such as radiocommunications dishes and antenna have prescribed appearance criteria such as colour matching to the background for the facility. It is noted that no similar obligation has been applied to these far more dominant tower structures. While there is obviously a limit on how much the adverse impact of a 30m tower can be mitigated by colours and screening, some attempt needs to be mandated.

The Length of Time that the Facility can remain in Place

Council can appreciate that the logistics of removing a 30m tower dictates that a reasonable time for removal of the facility needs to be allowed. However, a removal time of up to 28 days after the facility is no longer required appears to be overly generous in the circumstances. A maximum "lead time" for setting up the facility also needs to be set.

Also of concern is the length of time that a tower for a "high-demand holiday period" facility and a tower for an "events" facility can remain in place. A maximum period of 90 days in any calendar year for the former and 183 days in any calendar year for the latter suggests that the facility would be regarded by most people as permanent rather than temporary given its protracted visual impact.

Trailer Mounted Facilities preferred to Temporary Towers

Because of their ready transportability and size limitations, trailer mounted facilities are preferred to temporary towers. Temporary towers should only be permitted after all other options have been considered and shown to be unviable in terms of their capacity to meet demand.

Restoration Requirements

The proposed changes to the Telecommunications Code of Practice set a 10 business day period for commencement of restoration works following removal of the temporary facility. However, no time has been set for completion of the restoration works and there is even the ability for the carrier and the owner/occupier of the land to agree to a later commencement time. There are some instances where restoration should be given a higher priority than this, such as those instances where the land is mapped under an environmental, natural hazard, cultural heritage or scenic amenity overlay under a local planning instrument.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this very important issue.

For further information please contact David Hood, Manager Strategic Planning and Place Making on (07) 3480 6730 or email David.Hood@moretonbay.qld.gov.au.

Yours faithfully,



David Corkill
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