Policy P310 Telecommunications Infrastructure

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<th>Development Services</th>
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<td>Responsible Officer</td>
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**POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The City recognises the importance of Telecommunications Infrastructure to improved communications. The City also recognises that some Telecommunications Infrastructure, particularly mobile telephone towers, can be visually intrusive. This Planning Policy supports low-impact facilities, and opposes other Telecommunications Infrastructure which would have a significant adverse visual impact.

**POLICY SCOPE**

This Planning Policy applies to any above ground Telecommunications Infrastructure within the City of South Perth. As defined in the City of South Perth Town Planning Scheme No. 6, ‘Telecommunications Infrastructure’ means: “land used to accommodate any part of the infrastructure of a telecommunications network and includes any line, equipment, apparatus, tower, antenna, tunnel, duct, hole, pit or other structure used, or for use in or in connection with, a telecommunications network”.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

1. **Background**

   Authorised carriers are installing networks of microwave transmission facilities for mobile telephones and telecommunications cabling. This will provide services to users of mobile telephones and ‘cable’ television. Different forms of facilities have varying degrees of environmental impact.

   The following written laws regulate the installation of Telecommunications Infrastructure:
   (a) Telecommunications Act 1997 (Commonwealth)
   (b) Telecommunications Code of Practice 1997 (Commonwealth)
   (c) Telecommunications (Low-Impact Facilities) Determination, 1997 (Commonwealth)
   (d) City of South Perth Town Planning Scheme No. 6.

2. **Visual impact of Telecommunications Infrastructure**
   (a) **Low-impact facilities** -

   ‘Low-impact facility’ means a facility that the Minister has determined in the Low Impact Determination to be a low-impact facility. Schedule 3 to the Telecommunications Act 1997 (Commonwealth) identifies certain facilities that are not low-impact. These facilities include the following:
   (i) a mobile telecommunications tower that is not attached to a building;
   (ii) a tower attached to a building that is more than 5.0 metres high;
   (iii) an extension to a tower that has previously been extended;
   (iv) an extension to a tower, if the extension is more than 5.0 metres high;
   (v) overhead cabling; and
   (vi) a facility in an area of environmental significance.

   The City supports low-impact facilities. These facilities do not require the City’s approval. However, approved carriers must submit details to the City for information.
(b) **Other facilities** -
Telecommunications Infrastructure that does not constitute a low-impact facility requires planning approval. Planning approval must be obtained before installing any such facility.

In considering an application for planning approval, the City will have regard to the provisions of Town Planning Scheme No. 6 and the visual impact of the proposed Telecommunications Infrastructure. Planning approval will be refused where the City is of the opinion that the proposed facility would have a significant adverse visual impact. Alternatively, the City may grant planning approval conditional upon appropriate modifications to minimise the adverse visual impact.

4. **Health impact of Telecommunications Infrastructure**
The City is not authorised to consider the alleged health impacts of Telecommunications Infrastructure when determining an application for planning approval. National and international health authorities have determined that these facilities do not have major health impacts. The attachment to this Planning Policy refers to research findings in this regard.

5. **Resolution of disagreements on classification and related matters**
The City and an authorised carrier may disagree on the need to lodge an application for planning approval based on the classification of proposed Telecommunications Infrastructure. This may result in a disagreement on the level of public consultation required or the adequacy of the information submitted. The City may determine within the time limits specified in the *Telecommunications Code of Practice*, which classification applies to the proposed Telecommunications Infrastructure. In this case the following officers of the City may make such a determination:
   (a) Chief Executive Officer;
   (b) Director of Strategic and Regulatory Services; or
   (c) Manager, City Planning.

**LEGISLATION/ LOCAL LAW REQUIREMENTS**
City of South Perth Town Planning Scheme No. 6
*Telecommunications Act, 1997 (Commonwealth)*
Telecommunications Code of Practice, 1997
Telecommunications (Low-Impact Facilities) Determination, 1997
Australian Communications Industry Forum industry code - Deployment of Radiocommunications Infrastructure Code, 2002

**OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES/ KEY DOCUMENTS**
City of South Perth Strategic Plan 2015-2025
Attachment to Planning Policy P310: Telecommunications Infrastructure

Research findings relating to health impact
Independent scientific research has been conducted by Federal Government bodies including Austel and the Department of Human Services and Health in relation to the electromagnetic emissions (EME) from mobile telephone towers and their associated equipment buildings. The results have shown that the EME levels associated with such equipment are well within national and international guidelines, and are too low to cause a health risk to the community. These findings are supported by other research undertaken by the World Health Organisation, the International Radiation Protection Association and the National Radiological Protection Board, UK. In Australia, EME levels are governed by the Federal Government’s Australian Standard which is five times as strict as those in other countries, and twice as strict as the World Health Organisation’s recommendation.

Based on a review of research findings, the Health Department of Western Australia has advised that there is currently no health basis for restricting either the siting of mobile telephone towers in or near residential areas, or ground level access to them. However, the Department recognises that there is also community concern about the visual impact of the towers, and has recommended that any Council policy concerning the siting of mobile telephone towers should be formulated to recognise the community’s general concern about such facilities rather than as an explicit statement about the health impacts of these towers. Planning Policy P394 has been formulated on the recommended basis.

Although supporting the findings that there is currently no health basis for restricting the siting of mobile telephone towers, the World Health Organisation’s advice on electromagnetic fields and public health with respect to mobile telephones includes the following precautionary measures:

“Present scientific information does not indicate the need for any special precautions for use of mobile phones. If individuals are concerned, they might choose to limit their own or their children’s radiofrequency exposure by limiting the length of calls, or using ‘hands-free’ devices to keep mobile phones away from the head and body.”