

## Mobiles lacking radiation research

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THE head of the Australian Centre for Radio Frequency Bioeffects Research, Professor Irena Cosic, said Australia was lacking in research into 3G phones because they were so new here. However, she said they operated on a higher frequency than traditional mobiles, which should theoretically make it more difficult for radiation to penetrate the brain and body. The centre intended to follow up Dutch research, she said. The Dutch study raised concerns about the safety of antennas for new generation high-speed video phones after finding they can cause headaches and nausea.

About 50,000 Australians have a 3G phone following telco Hutchison Orange's launch in April. Hutchison has about 1600 antennas, or base stations, all in city areas of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and the Gold Coast. A study by the Dutch government and technological research institute TNO compared radiation from base stations for the current mobile phone network with base stations for 3G networks. "If the test group was exposed to third-generation base station signals there was a significant impact," the Dutch Economics Ministry said. "They felt tingling sensations, got headaches and felt nauseous."

Dr Colin Roy, director of the non-ionising radiation branch of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, said the study was credible but needed replication. He said radiation from transmitters was generally low and well within Australian safety standards. Mobile phone exposure, while not the subject of the study, was much higher, he said. "Phones actually do give the same sort of radiation but at a much higher level and much closer to the standard. "Because of the nature of the networks the emissions from the 3G towers are even lower than the current digital ones. "But what we're talking about here specifically is the tower, and of course that exposure occurs whether you have a mobile phone or not."

Australia's mobile industry said there was no substantive evidence mobiles caused headaches. The executive director of the Mobile Carriers Forum, Tanya Stoianoff, also noted advice from the World Health Organisation that said no recent reviews had concluded exposure to radio frequency fields from mobile phones and their base stations caused adverse health consequences. A spokeswoman for Hutchison said the company did not wish to comment. ~ AAP