

Safety first

THE ISSUE OF TELCO ACCESS TO BUILDINGS HAS SUCCESSFULLY BEEN TAKEN OFF THE BOIL. HOWEVER A NEW THREAT MAY BE EMERGING IN THE COMMUNICATIONS GAME. CHRIS LARSEN REPORTS.

Abbreviations promise to dominate an emergent issue in the business of managing telecommunications towers on commercial buildings.

You're probably familiar with OH&S – occupational health and safety. OH&S threatens to be a problem in this sector because of EMR – electro-magnetic radiation (i.e. the waves emitted by transmitters).

If the problem becomes real then no doubt we'll have a bout of FIQ (fix it

solution to the problem. The company has formed a joint venture with EMC Technologies to create a nationwide, industry-recognised management system for rooftop emitters.

"At the moment, despite radiation folders being created for sites, there is no publicly accessible system in place. The folders are either internal documents or are retained in communications sheds or in desk drawers.

"What is needed is a single on-line

"While the building owner must now be responsible for the management of certain activities that previously were left to rooftop tenants, there are ... additional benefits, not only for building owners but also carriers.

"By integrating the EMR assessment process with existing on-line licensing, substantial savings result for carriers."

FuturePace's proposal has a supporter in Richard Opie, manager of property e-business development for AMP and chair of the Property Council's telecommunications sub-committee.

"I think what FuturePace is proposing is sound," Opie says.

"It's inevitable that some form of controls (will be applied) in buildings. It's really just how that comes into being.

"I would support any initiative that would allow us to self-regulate."

However Adrian Service – national executive director for consultancy JG Service – says he is "trying to see the value proposition, the upside" in the proposal.

Service, who counts the telecommunications carriers as his major clients, says:

"Like all things it's about having a plan, a process and a procedure. It's a risk management procedure.

"The carriers have a robust methodology for dealing with these issues themselves," and it is the carriers who have a higher OH&S risk than building owners in this area.

"There's some commercial information they (the carriers) may not be willing to share," Service says.

"If you're a building owner, even if you're a portfolio owner ... you pretty much know that stuff anyway." ■

"Essentially, both industries can benefit by doing under one management system what the carriers cannot do individually or as a group."

Barbara Phi

quick) followed swiftly by OWBS (or we'll be sued). This could become quite a problem if you HNI (have no insurance).

ACT-based company FuturePace Solutions says the property industry faces a problem in the growing awareness of the hazards associated with human exposure to EMR from radio antennae.

"A new government standard for the level of safe worker and public exposure was approved in March this year," says FuturePace director Barbara Phi.

"This standard is currently being applied to OH&S rulings throughout Australia and the property industry needs to make choices about how to manage its consequences."

FuturePace believes it has created a

management system which recognises that neither the property owner nor the telcos start out to create a human exposure risk, it being simply an unfortunate by-product of both core businesses."

FuturePace's model would record and manage EMR emissions on rooftops, coordinate antennae placement and safety, and integrate EMR assessment with an existing, on-line transmitter licensing process.

Phi believes the interests of the owners and carriers could be aligned if the process was properly managed, while at the same time producing cost savings for both sides.

"Essentially, both industries can benefit by doing under one management system what the carriers cannot do individually or as a group," Phi says.