



PRESS RELEASE

CONSTANTIA CELL MAST – A COMMUNITY MOBILISED

This could be a story about failed council processes and illegal construction – but it isn't;

This could be a story about a neighbourhood, fighting to protect their property values – but it isn't;

This could be a story about hundreds of school children being exposed to a potential health risk – but it isn't;

This could be a story about a dead-end technology that will ultimately not be able to deliver on its promise, leaving our cities littered with obsolete infrastructure – but it isn't;

This is a story about the undermining of our democracy. This is a story about how a corporation was able to bully residents in their own neighbourhood. This is a story about the flagrant disregard for the rights of a community exhibited by government and corporate interests and about profit over the will of the people.

For the best part of 17 years, the greater community of the Strawberry Lane area has been actively opposing the construction of cell phone masts in the area. They have marched, have signed petitions, have launched websites, held protests and have met with cell phone company executives to explain their views and their communal position. The community has successfully opposed two previous attempts to erect masts in the area and now the community has had enough of having to fight and wants to know why they have to keep fighting to defend their rights in their own neighbourhood.

Why, in a democratic society, is the will of the majority no longer a deciding factor in what happens in the midst of a residential community?

What has happened to allow the business interests of corporations more rights than the ratepayers and property owners in a residential suburb?

This is not about cell technology or about this one particular tower. This is about a growing trend in government to serve the interests of big business despite the protestations by, and regardless of the effect on, the taxpaying voter.



Despite clear opposition from the community, on Wednesday the 12th of November 2014, MTN began installation of a cell tower in Dalham Rd in the Constantia Rural area. The tower is situated some 22 meters from the bedroom of the nearest resident with children and less than 50 meters from the bedrooms of other neighbourhood children.

EMRSA is not against the sale of bandwidth nor are we against cell phone technology. We do not want to oppose the ability of business to function, provided that the construction of infrastructure in our own neighbourhood is approached in an inclusive manner and that our opinion is sought and heeded. As a community we feel that better alternatives, such as optic fibre landline based Internet, are available. We also feel that such wired technologies ultimately have greater bandwidth potential than wireless and do not pose the same risks or cause the same concerns. We simply feel that as there is sufficient doubt amongst communities globally as to the safety and desirability of wireless technology, that no corporation or government should have the right to impose this technology on a residential community against their will.

On Friday the 28th November 2014 at 15h00 EMRSA will be marching from 10 Firgrove Farm, Spaanschemat River Road (opposite Aloe Rd), proceeding to the newly constructed cell tower in Dalham Road.

We will be marching against Angela Schofield who has rented her property to MTN despite the protestations of neighbours and the greater community;

We will be marching against MTN for its installation of the Dalham Rd tower;

We will be marching against the legislation that favours corporations over citizens;

EMRSA stands with every South African community that believes they have the right to choose what can and cannot be built in their neighbourhood and believe they have the right to choose their preferred method of internet connectivity and of buying the bandwidth they require.

It's a simple fight. Our democratic right to choose has been taken from us. We are taking it back.

For more information please contact EMRSA : info@emrsa.co.za