

Submission to the: Inquiry on AI Data Centres in Tasmania

Submitters contact details:

Rowan Smith


Terms of Reference: Inquire into and report upon the construction and operation of AI data centres in Tasmania, including recommending future legislation and regulations necessary to: |

1. Protect public resources and the environment;

There is an exponentially growing multitude of evidence that communities suffer the impacts of built data centres - precious and limited community resources including water and electricity especially - but equally sound pollution, smell, light pollution, air pollution.

AI Data Centres are an anathema to *everything* that Tasmania should be standing for, fighting for in terms of the state's brand and place in the world. I feel most strongly that allowing AI Data Centres to proliferate in Tasmania would be *the end* of everything that makes Tasmania at all special. My view is that allowing AI Data Centres to proliferate would place public resources under irredeemable threat. The environment under irredeemable threat.

2. Ensure Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System adequately recognises and addresses the specific impacts of the development and construction of AI and data facilities;

A meaningful resource management and planning system regarding the impacts of the development and construction of any AI Data Centres in Tasmania is critical - and therefore welcome and support this Inquiry.

3. Provide Parliamentary oversight and accountability for new facility construction and resource allocation;

I welcome and support this Inquiry to provide oversight and accountability for any construction and resource allocation.

4. Ensure transparent public disclosure of resource consumption;

This government's record for public disclosure and transparency is shot. Instead this government is clearly committed to backroom deals, obfuscation of fact, obstruction of disagreement, downright bullying and community divisiveness. They have no integrity. They have no social licence.

I welcome and support this Inquiry to recommend and regulate transparent public disclosure of resource consumption.

5. Provide the Tasmanian community with adequate opportunities for consultation;

Anyone educated enough to read what's happening in other states and countries with regards to the push back against the proliferation of AI Data Centres is against any further construction of centres in Tasmania without proper due process for risk and feasibility.

Yet the latest sports sponsorship announcements demonstrate the government's appalling willingness to force its agenda - a terrible optic - hiding in plain sight.

I welcome and support this Inquiry to make sure the Tasmanian community is given adequate opportunities for consultation.

6. Ensures the Tasmanian community receive tangible benefits from all AI and data facilities constructed in the state; and

In my opinion, there are no benefits.

7. Any other matter incidental.

I have read the book, The AI Con.

The Authors are:

Emily M. Bender

Dr Emily M. Bender is a Professor of Linguistics at the University of Washington. Her work, including the touchstone 'Stochastic Parrots' paper, brings a linguistic perspective to how large language models work and why the illusion they produce is so compelling. In 2023 she was included in the inaugural TIME100 AI list of most influential people in AI.

Alex Hanna

Dr Alex Hanna is Director of Research at the Distributed AI Research Institute (DAIR) and a former senior research scientist on Google's Ethical AI team. She is an outspoken critic of the tech industry and a proponent of community-based uses of technology.

I view the current AI Data Centre 'rush' as a Silicon Valley billionaire-club land grab. With no meaningful benefits to local communities.

I am also a creative practitioner and business owner who has given much to Tasmania over twenty five years, employing many Tasmanians too.

The Federal Government's current talks with AI Companies over softening copyright laws in this country is now a further grave concern.

I read about the North American, Irish, and other global communities rising up against the AI Data Centres already wreaking havoc with people's lives and amenities.

I welcome and support this Inquiry - and know that the fundamental biggest need is for Points 1 and 2 above.