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The Secretary
Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania
Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

By email: assemblygaa@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Secretary

Submission to the Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania

West Tamar Council (**Council**) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee overseeing the Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania.

Council provides the following submission, which was endorsed at its meeting of 15 September 2026.

Council acknowledges that councillors expressed a range of views during consideration of these matters. This submission reflects areas of broad agreement relevant to Council's statutory responsibilities while recognising those differing views.

Council notes your Terms of Reference and makes its submission in relation to points 2 and 5 as follows:

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;*

Council has previously sought advice from the Ministers responsible for Planning and for Environment and Climate Change on whether Tasmania's current planning and environmental frameworks are adequately equipped to assess AI and data centre developments, and whether clearer statewide requirements would provide greater certainty for communities, planning authorities and proponents.

Councillors expressed differing views on the adequacy of the existing framework and the appropriate assessment pathway. One view was that AI and data centre developments could already be assessed through the major projects provisions.



Another was that clearer statutory criteria or thresholds may be required to ensure developments of sufficient scale, complexity or impact receive an appropriately rigorous assessment.

Notwithstanding these differing views, Council considers that AI and data centre developments should be assessed primarily through Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System.

Planning legislation is the most appropriate mechanism for establishing transparent, consistent and enforceable requirements relating to land use, infrastructure capacity, energy and water demand, environmental and health impacts, noise, pollution, community amenity and effects extending across municipal boundaries.

The planning framework should establish clear criteria or thresholds—such as project scale, capital value, infrastructure demand, development footprint or potential regional impact—to trigger an enhanced assessment pathway. If the current legislation does not provide this certainty, the relevant planning legislation, regulations, State Planning Provisions or other statutory planning instruments should be amended.

Any strengthened requirements should be proportionate to the scale, location, resource demands and potential regional impacts of the proposed development.

5. Provide the Tasmanian Community with adequate opportunities for consultation.

Councillors held differing views on whether the Tasmanian community has adequate opportunities to participate in decisions about AI and data centre developments, particularly when their impacts may extend beyond the municipality in which they are proposed.

Councillors also held differing views on the extent to which existing processes provide adequate community consultation. However, there was support for any additional consultation requirements being established through the planning framework so that they are clear, consistent and enforceable.

Council considers that consultation requirements should be proportionate to the scale, nature and potential impacts of a proposal. For developments meeting prescribed thresholds, the planning framework should trigger enhanced consultation requirements across all communities and municipal areas that may be materially affected.

Council further submits that responsibility for undertaking and funding any enhanced consultation should rest primarily with the proponent, within a process established and overseen through the planning system. This would avoid transferring significant consultation costs to councils while ensuring that community feedback is obtained early enough to inform the assessment process.

Any consultation mechanism should also clearly explain how community feedback will be considered against the statutory assessment criteria. This is important to avoid creating an expectation that a planning authority may refuse an otherwise compliant application on grounds that are not available under the relevant planning legislation.

Yours sincerely



Kristen Desmond

**Chief Executive Officer
West Tamar Council**