

Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania

September 21, 2026

The House of Assembly Parliamentary Committee

To the Members,

I respond to this Inquiry, with serious concerns, with not only the obvious issues of resource allocation and long term consequences of the sudden industrialisation of large areas of our state, but also the lack of public consultation and reliable expert and scientific analysis of unknown new technology being rolled out. Without correcting this breach, it would show a serious lack of responsibility, respect, ethics and democratic process for the community and place of Tasmania/Lutruwita .

It is being reiterated over and over, Tasmania is such a good location for AI Data Centres. I think the more accurate statement is a question- Are AI Data Centres good for Tasmania? Would this industry pass a basic SWOT analysis? Would there be any risks involved with a possible AI Bubble bursting as is a likely prediction from economic analysts? The guardrails were not in place before allowing corporate free reign. The pause or Moratorium would allow the process to proceed safely and responsibly, or not at all.

I will do my best to respond within the terms of reference requested, although I think there is more outside this scope that needs more thorough investigation.

Terms of Reference

1. Protect public resources and the environment;
AI Data Centres, driven by Big Tech Corporations have shown, around the world, to require vast amounts of power and water for cooling. They carry a very heavy footprint in resources used. There has been a tsunami invasion of these factories globally, which has led to a major land grab, near water and accessible power to fuel them. There is a great risk Tasmania cannot supply the demand without harming its balance. Where is there any solid evidence of enduring benefits for Tasmania. Instead evidence points to great risk and unknown outcomes.
2. Worldwide, rare earth and other minerals are being resource extracted unsustainably and seriously harming those regions to supply the industry and the industrial renewables and storage batteries to drive the factories and infrastructure (1). All part of the supply chain.
 - . With the introduction of many AI factories, some hyperscale, how do we weigh the balance with the loss of farmland, ecosystems, biodiversity the communities and their present livelihoods such as Tourism? A critical crossroads to protect the Tasmanian identity and character, the natural unique qualities could be destroyed in a short space of time. The promise of lucrative investments has a high probability of being a mirage. Indications of the AI bubble collapsing (13).

Further negative impacts include:

- . Upward pressure on inflation, rising costs of utilities

- . 24 hour fluorescent lighting
- . Indigenous original community has not been consulted on land, ecosystem and resource governance.
- . If people are considered a 'resource', which I wholeheartedly disagree with, what about the loss of jobs, and after the construction phase, what is left? What guarantees of meaningful employment?
- . Loss of environment with invasive centralised renewable industries that feed the data centres, and loss of tourism businesses.
- . Heating of temperature near facilities and increased fire risk.

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.

- . Five senior university lecturers hold serious concerns over the AI Data Centre explosion (5).
- . At present exists a fragmented legal landscape. Planning laws were not designed for these mega projects.
- . There is no overarching assessment framework to include all the cumulative impacts to be analysed and considered together. Integration of the associated renewable infrastructure and all the new industrial proposals.

Without careful planning and strict and fair regulations/legislation to protect the energy and water allocations there

would be detrimental consequences for the community and environment.

- . Regulations for the protection from the use of 24 hour backup diesel generators, causing noise and air pollution. Serious health effects such as asthma from particulate matter and volatile components. Firmus is already applying through TASCAT for extension of use.

- . There are significant health risks, that have been downplayed by these industries. The health effects of EMF, ELF and magnetic fields exposure have been studied for decades (2), (3).

- . Environmental Health Sciences has listed 18 key studies as as examples of exposure to these fields. Serious conditions including Asthma, alzheimers, cancer, oxidative stress, miscarriage, myocardial contractility, DNA damage, harm to sperm quality and obesity (4).

- . Laws should protect, and stop from having them built in the wrong place such as neighbourhoods and near schools, as a prime example.

- . Demand compensation for pollution, dust, noise, loss of peaceful environment and adverse health effects. Assault is a criminal charge. Equal real estate value compensation of home before they arrived to disrupt, so if relocation is necessary they can safely do so.

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

“Communities are blindsided by well-financed corporate pushes, while existing policies evaluate only a few hazards in isolation, creating massive loopholes that fail to protect public health and the environment” a quote from Environmental Health Sciences (3).

A lot can be learned from overseas experiences, may not have to reinvent the wheel. (2). Ordinances and legislative Bills, for example in Ontario, Canada (9). They are building a safer framework with fairer outcomes. Presently we are sitting ducks for exploitation.

All state and local councils regulations need to implement safeguards immediately, as these tech facilities are rushing in before you do. AI data centres can be built anywhere there's access to power and water and a fibre optic cable. Include equity protection, disadvantaged communities are a prime target, and usually bear the brunt. Prepare to have protective leverage over the corporations terms where they exploit. People over profit. A revolutionary thought!

Other Areas that need parliamentary oversight:

- . What protection laws will have teeth?
- . Digital sovereignty, protection of private data, business, government and military information. How to safeguard?
- . copyright protection for writers, artists and musicians. Acknowledgement and compensation for their original works.
- . Decentralisation of information (10). Privacy as a fundamental right (11).
- . Cybersecurity and data breaches

. Consideration that these facilities can be military targets. Data centres are near high quality energy and water supplies, easily discoverable via satellite imagery, usually near urban centres placing populations at risk. “The boundary between civilian and military computing is not blurred, it has all but collapsed” (12). Other choke points include submarine cables carrying data traffic, it is a strategic and commercial risk.

4. Ensure transparent public disclosure of resource consumption;

There has not been transparent public disclosure. So far the projects appear and they have already been approved. Very small windows of time to respond and can easily be missed. Non disclosure agreements lock things in without public knowledge or input. The newly revealed 6 new data centres are in unknown locations. This is not building community trust. And is this even legal? certainly unethical.

5. Provide the community with adequate opportunities for discussion;

It is not only discussion required, but actual rights to refuse if a project is detrimental to the community. Sufficient mitigation must be achieved, or a project will need to be relocated.

6. Any other matters incidental;

Quotes from Stephen Hawking, the renowned theoretical physicist:

“The creation of powerful artificial intelligence could lead to the end of the human race”

“The singularity, an advanced Artificial Intelligence could take off on its own and redesign itself at an ever increasing rate” (7).

We are at a critical crossroads, without strict guidelines, it is no longer theoretical. Are we enabling something that would supersede all biological life on planet earth? (8).

Hopefully it's not ALL doom and gloom, but some of it is and needs to be considered. A quote from Truthout, “Warfare, social control and repression are also being digitised and automated. Global AI supply chains span everything from mineral extraction to manufacturing to data centre operation. Each step along the way involves the displacement of communities, the exploitation of labour, and the suppression of resistance. Big tech has sought to embed itself in military and security agencies around the world. The AI State with advanced capacity to surveillance and control.” What are we naively inviting in, where other communities are shielding against in the majority of cases? Do the dangers outweigh any benefits?

Thankyou for considering this information,

Sincerely, Carran Doolan

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