Submission: Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania

Jared Condon | Independent researcher and founder, CRUX | 11 September 2026

Executive summary

Tasmania should evaluate proposed AI data centres through explicit, claim-specific evidence obligations. The central question is not whether data centres are inherently beneficial or harmful. It is whether claims about electricity demand, new generation, network cost, water, jobs, local procurement, resilience and community benefit are supported by evidence strong enough for the decisions being made.

- Require a public claim-and-evidence schedule for material project assertions.
- Separate forecast claims from verified outcomes and state uncertainty ranges.
- Require proponents to identify energy demand, additional generation commitments, network impacts and who bears associated costs.
- Require change triggers: material changes in project scale, technology, power demand or ownership should force reassessment of affected claims.
- Use independent verification for high-materiality claims rather than relying solely on proponent-supplied summaries.
- Publish outcome tracking so promised jobs, local spending, power arrangements and environmental impacts can be compared with realised results.

1. An evidence framework for major AI infrastructure

Large data-centre proposals combine uncertain forecasts with long-lived infrastructure and public-system dependencies. A useful governance model is to require each material claim to identify its evidence, assumptions, confidence or uncertainty, responsible verifier, decision relevance and the conditions under which the claim must be updated or withdrawn.

2. Recommended disclosure schedule

Electricity

Maximum and expected MW demand by project stage; load profile; connection assumptions; additional generation commitments; firming/storage assumptions; network augmentation; curtailment arrangements; and allocation of connection/network costs.

Water

Expected annual and peak water use, cooling technology, source, recycling assumptions, drought contingencies and material changes under expansion scenarios.

Jobs and local benefit

Construction and ongoing FTEs separately; Tasmanian-resident employment assumptions; salary bands where appropriate; local procurement targets; training commitments; and methodology used to estimate indirect jobs.

Economic claims

Tax, investment, export/service revenue and multiplier claims should identify model, assumptions and sensitivity ranges rather than appear as single-point benefits.

Environmental and community impacts

Land use, noise, heat, backup generation, transmission infrastructure, waste and emergency-response implications should be stated with monitoring and mitigation commitments.

3. New generation and grid claims

Where government or proponents state that new load will 'bring new generation', the obligation should be made operational. The public record should identify the generation project or procurement mechanism, expected commissioning sequence, firmness assumptions, whether the generation is additional to existing commitments, and what happens if the generation is delayed or unavailable.

4. Change-triggered reassessment

Approvals and public benefit claims should not be treated as permanently valid. Material changes in project capacity, computing density, cooling design, owner, financing, grid connection, energy procurement or construction sequence should trigger reassessment of the claims that depend on those facts.

5. Independent verification and public reporting

For high-materiality claims, Tasmania should require independent verification or publish enough underlying methodology for meaningful scrutiny. A concise annual outcome table could compare forecast versus realised electricity demand, additional generation, water use, employment, local procurement and public-system costs.

6. Recommendation

The Committee should recommend a standing evidence and reassessment framework for large data centres rather than resolving the issue through a one-time yes/no judgment on individual projects. That would support investment where benefits are demonstrable while protecting the State against unsupported forecasts, scope drift and costs transferred to other users.

About the submitter

I am a Hobart-based independent researcher and founder of CRUX, a bootstrapped project developing evidence-assurance methods. This submission is independent and does not represent a data-centre proponent, energy company or political organisation.

Sources

Parliament of Tasmania, Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania:
https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/committees/house-of-assembly/current-committees

Tasmanian parliamentary records and constituency questions on AI data centres:
https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/