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The House of Assembly Standing Committee on Government Administration A has resolved to inquire into and report upon the construction and operation of AI data centres in Tasmania, including recommending future legislation and regulations necessary to:

Terms of Reference:

1. Protect public resources and the environment;

Until recently, I've always thought that Tasmania's politicians have done a pretty good job of protecting Tasmania's plentiful resources and natural environments. Now I am reading how AI data centres are going to impact these resources, and that elected decision-makers have already approved some proposals, I am very worried that Tasmania's long term sustainability is not being protected. The scale of the cooling and backup power needs is substantial, requiring more generation to be built.

There are reports that agricultural water resources may be used to support data centre operations. Farming is crucial to Tasmania's economy and identity, therefore questions about future competition for water and electricity resources must be answered.

Data centres will also compete with other industries for land, planning approvals, grid capacity and staff, which can impact housing delivery and affordability, a key issue in Tasmania today.

I ask that this committee urge decision-makers to immediately pause the development of all data centres and create new legislation to suit them.

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;

Written in 1993, Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS) was never designed to evaluate high-intensity AI megafactories. I have read that it is lacking in areas such as risk assessment re diesel/lithium batteries, in handling heavy cooling-system noise and immense energy consumption, and environmental footprint. I agree with calls to replace the outdated frameworks which are currently in place, to instead specifically address and assess AI data centres. (eg. Latrobe Council advocating for a more appropriate framework)

Government 'Expectations' should be that every new data centre is required to match 100% of demand with additional renewables and storage – not capacity that already exists – with timelines which are tied to grid connection.

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

Decision-makers are accountable to the Tasmanians who they represent, and Tasmanians are now asking Parliamentarians to oversee and regulate developments which have such massive potential demand on resources and environment.

Although the Georgetown council approved a proposal from Firmus Technologies, it endeavoured some form of regulation by including 15 conditions, such as restricting the use of 276 backup diesel

generators to emergencies, power failures, and limited testing times. Firmus' appeal against this restriction has fuelled mistrust, and no amount of sports sponsorship will repair that. Georgetown council really should have done what Latrobe did, reject the application, and ask that it be considered a Major Project, but at least they have tried to protect their electorate. The public want a strong stance against such appeals.

4. Ensure transparent public disclosure of resource consumption;

The public is only now being made aware of the cumulative resource impacts. The lack of community consultation by the Government and local Councils, regarding the St Leonards and Bell Bay proposals is very disappointing, and downright sneaky.

Projects with implications extending well beyond traditional planning considerations – such as energy demand, land use, long-term economic benefits – should require accountability beyond traditional considerations, with a public register that measures, scrutinises, and regulates operations.

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

I am aware that just yesterday, government has invited community submissions, due 5 Oct – a good democratic move. I hope that there are other methods of community consultation about to be launched too, to cater for the members of the public who aren't able to submit a written submission (for any number of reasons, including lack of literacy skills).

All future large-scale proposals should require a variety of accessible public consultation before approvals proceed.

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

While some have suggested employment benefits, people are justifiably concerned over massive energy and water consumption relative to the low number of **long-term jobs** created. It has been reported that Bell Bay Aluminium supports roughly 20 times more jobs per MW of power used than the proposed Long Reach AI Data Centre. ([Bell Bay Aluminium faces uncertain future amid stalled power deal and subsidy debate; Bauxite Mining, Price, Ore, Mineral, Formula, Production.](#))

7. Any other matter incidental.

Opposition to the rapid expansion of these facilities is gaining momentum, and people are no longer content to leave decisions, and our long-term wellbeing, in the hands of the elected parliamentarians.. **People who have never signed a petition are signing. People who have never written a submission are writing.** Some are even donating to appeals to fund legal challenges.

Word is spreading like wildfire. A moratorium on AI and data centre facilities is crucial, until stronger environmental protection standards and renewable energy infrastructure are in place. This is the type of action which will relieve our concerns, and renew our confidence and respect in Tasmania's elected leaders.