

From: [Grace Walsh](#)
To: [House of Assembly - GAA](#)
Subject: Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania: Public Submission
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Good evening,

I am writing to contribute some details to the upcoming inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania. I am an Irish / Australian dual citizen, who has lived in Tasmania for 11 years. My professional background is in community development, and I am in the final stages of a PhD with the Centre for Social Impact (Swinburne University) where I am researching the community economies, youth participation and regional futures.

In relation to terms of reference 1, 2 and 4, I would like to draw your attention to a recent UN report on the environmental impact of AI, where Ireland has been cited as a 'cautionary' tale. This report was compiled by an academic body, the UN Institute for Water, Environment and Health. To quote directly from the report:

"“One of the most consequential dimensions of AI that remains comparatively underexamined is its environmental footprint and the justice implications that follow.”

Ireland is described as “a live cautionary example” of energy demand running ahead of infrastructure, with data centres using electricity equivalent to all urban households combined (22% of the entire energy grid, expected to rise to 30% in the coming years).

In Ireland there is growing dissatisfaction with this development, particularly as it happens during a cost-of-living crisis, and on the cusp of a food security crisis, prompted by growing instability in the Strait of Hormuz, and elsewhere.

I urge you to look at what is happening in Ireland, an island, comparable in size to Tasmania, and the disproportionate burden the introduction of AI centres has placed on the population there, albeit a larger population. More details can be found here - [Ireland's data centre strain a 'cautionary tale' for rest of world, UN says – The Irish Times](#).

In relation to terms of reference number 6, regarding the tangible benefits from AI, I would again urge the wellbeing of community and local community economies as a precursor to wellbeing and resilience to be considered. The inability of government to

consider anything other than growth-based, extractive model of economic development is extremely detrimental to regional futures. There needs to be tangible, verifiable evidence that the community as a whole, will see tangible benefits, from the development of these centres.

Kind regards,

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