



Government Administration Committee A

Inquiry on AI Data Centres in Tasmania

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.

Members of the public may use this form as a template to provide comment on the Committee Inquiry Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference are set out below and comments should be limited to these areas.

Submissions become Committee documents that may be published on the Committee website and quoted in the Committee's report to Parliament. Should you not wish whole or parts of your submission to be published, please clearly indicate this in your submission. Persons making submissions must not release them without the approval of the Committee. Submissions are protected by parliamentary privilege but the unauthorised release of them is not.

Submissions should be received by the closing date of **Monday, 21 September 2026** and should be emailed to assemblygaa@parliament.tas.gov.au, or posted to: Secretary, Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania, Parliament House Hobart, 7000.

Submitters contact details:

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Contact number: [REDACTED]

(The above information is used by the Secretariate to verify submissions and to contact the submitter should the Committee wish to seek further information. Should you not provide the above information, the Committee may not accept your submission to the Inquiry.)

Terms of Reference:

Inquire into and report upon the construction and operation of AI data centres in Tasmania, including recommending future legislation and regulations necessary to:

1. Protect public resources and the environment;

1. Water Pollution - Closed loop systems are a bit of a misnomer as they still require flushing for maintenance and can spring leaks – and when they do PFAS (forever chemicals) are discharged into ecosystems negatively affecting our drinking water and habitat for native wildlife and livestock. Especially important for sites such as St Leonards where the river flow will take these chemicals into the heart of an urban population past schools and parks before flowing into wetlands.

2. Water Use – Current modelling forecasts that as the climate crisis gathers speed - now that we have passed the 1.5 degree tipping point - Tasmania will move into a rapidly drying climate. Data centres put at risk both the safety and availability of water for LIVING ENTITIES.

3. Construction Footprint – Manufacturing one tonne of concrete produces 410kg of CO₂ – the very construction of these centres is damaging to our SHARED environment.

4. Emissions – Proposals submitted for these AI data centre sites put forward an average of 10 days of above 26 degree heat – which is when highly polluting backup diesel generators will need to run to assist in cooling the facilities. Referring to last year's BOM data for one site – St Leonards – shows 39 days above 26 degrees – so one tenth of the year at a minimum will require generator use with all the noise and emissions that go with it. And models show that the climate is only going to get hotter, so 39 days above 26 degrees is likely to be a dream of days gone by in a few short years. Diesel use produces more CO₂ than petrol as it requires higher temperatures to refine, so the lifecycle emission overall are worse. In addition, diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen.

5. Noise Pollution – AI data centres produce sound and infrasound. Loudness (over 85db is harmful, and centres regularly get up to 96db). Infrasound are the low-frequency emissions that humans and animals feel as pressure but cannot hear (infrasound at high volumes can affect the central nervous system and heart function according to one university study). In addition, infrasound causes changes in animal migration routes as they avoid the areas. Local residents globally who live near data centres have reported dizziness, nausea, vertigo, insomnia, headaches and anxiety symptoms since centre commissioning.

6. Light Pollution – AI data centres produce "Light Trespass", "Skyglow" and ALAN (artificial light at night). Because they operate around the clock, security lighting creates a permanent artificial twilight, disrupting human circadian rhythms, suppressing melatonin production and degrading property enjoyment - whilst increasing risks of sleep disorders and anxiety, and fragmenting local nocturnal ecosystems by disorienting migratory birds and insects. In addition, the light emitted destroys the "dark sky" character of a neighbourhood, making a residential area feel like a permanent industrial construction site.

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;

Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System needs to be urgently updated to reflect the effects these new technologies have on the environment. Until this has taken place, a moratorium on any new centres should be enacted immediately on the precautionary principle that until we know more we cannot plan for safe communities and protected environments THAT WE ALL DEPEND UPON.

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

These applications have been, and are being, rushed through before the systems are in place to deal with them. To ensure ALL ELECTED MEMBERS are informed and able to advocate for their electorates in these matters - and to safeguard OUR SHARED RESOURCES - genuine cross-Parliamentary oversight should be urgently mandated – especially as it has only recently become apparent to public knowledge that planning for these centres goes as far back as 2018.

Current electricity production will not support both data centres and household use – raising the potential for increased charges and possible brownouts.

4. Ensure transparent public disclosure of resource consumption;

To safeguard and appropriately allocate and manage OUR SHARED RESOURCES, transparent public disclosure of resource consumption should be implemented.

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

These data centres will effect many facets of Tasmanian life, and it is therefore crucial that communities are able to be involved in and LISTENED TO when planning is in progress. Genuine engagement and respect should be a minimum baseline for moving forward – the voices of the people should be heard, considered and referred to in any decision-making process.

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

- AI data centres may generate some employment in the construction phase, but create few jobs longterm other than a handful of maintenance and security roles, so it is clear that any benefits will not flow from this avenue. It is hard to think of any benefits flowing to the communities, unless you include the sports sponsorships which have recently been announced.
- Within the current tranche of data centres, profits will flow to offshore located companies - no taxes will be paid.
- No AI company to date has made any profit (the figure being tossed around at the moment is collectively 2.3 Trillion USD in losses), so it is hard to see these data centres as anything more than stranded assets in waiting. As hard as the AI companies promote the relentlessness and inevitability of AI, the younger generations (who will be hit hardest by the uptake of AI replacing their career prospects) are mostly eschewing it, and amongst the older generations a growing number are seeing the harmful effects and reducing their use. There are no benefits to be had if the future contains only empty data centre shells requiring public monies to upkeep or demolish once the AI frenzy has collapsed.

7. Any other matter incidental.

ETHICS – leaving aside the data centres for a minute, any responsible person should enquire as to whether we want to build infrastructure to support a technology that has:

- Replaced many jobs already - especially entry-level ones
- Causes cultural stagnation as everything draws from the same (stolen) dataset and output is increasingly homogenised
- Is built on the back of non-consensual theft of human knowledge and creativity
- Is currently unregulated and so a complete wild west of development with the industry known for “moving fast and breaking things” – those ‘things’ including social cohesion
- Raises genuine existential dangers for us as a species – see the current call for a slowdown from AI CEOs
- Greatly negatively impacts the more vulnerable in our society such as women and children with harmful generative images based on real people, or information readily available on causing self-harm or harm to others.

Focusing back in on the data centres:

- Their presence could lead to greater food insecurity locally as the infrasound emissions adversely effect bee populations.
- Developments such as these have historically approached regional and poorer communities and promised financial and employment gains but then under-delivered. This also means these same communities suffer all of the pollution and negative associated costs (sight lines, sound, increased utility charges, water pollution etc), but are much less able to financially mount compensation claims.
- Historically, these sites are likely only startup capacity - which means that what is approved at 60 MW ends up at 400 MW with very different consequences for the effected community.

- These sorts of sites have been physical targets in our increasingly fractured geo-political world.
- As it is unknown what AI functionality will be running on the infrastructure, do we really want to make Tasmania a host site for potential surveillance or military use?

In short, the lack of benefits and possible existential costs are likely not worth the limited gains, but urgent oversight, slowdown, public consultations and an immediate moratorium on any new developments are a starting point for a considered and informed way forward. We need to be thinking generations ahead, not short term.