

Submission into the Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania

Submission by [REDACTED]

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Terms of Reference:

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

I am incredibly concerned about the fast paced development and approval of data centres in Tasmania.

In particular I am concerned about:

Ensuring the protection of public resources and the environment:

- Water use. When they overheat data centres need to access significant amounts of water all in one go. This has impact on supply and will stress the limited resource of water on an increasingly drought prone island.
- Electricity use. Data centres require uninterrupted power at scale. This is much harder on renewable energy and thus will add significant fossil fuel demand. Power usage will add strain to the grid during peak times and the risks of this to community need to be considered.
- Air pollution. Diesel generators as back up energy supply that will likely be frequently used with have a significant health impact on people living nearby. That they will be used frequently is suggested by Firmus appealing basic restrictions on generator use.¹
- Land and water pollution. Data centres will contribute to a potentially massive increase in e-waste and to the possible release of 'forever chemicals' into the local environment (and wherever this large amount of waste is processed).²
- According to a report by GPAP the growth in data centres in Australia is driving increased fossil fuel use on the grid and putting climate targets further out of reach.³ This is both a significant environmental problem locally, nationally and globally.⁴

1 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-09-15/firmus-technologies-lodge-tascat-appeal-for-generator-use/107144572>

2 <https://reneweconomy.com.au/overlooked-challenge-data-centre-boom-could-lift-e-waste-load-10-fold-increase-forever-chemical-risks/>

3 <https://www.greenpeace.org.au/greenpeace-reports/ai-data-centres-draining-energy-australia/>

4 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgl3we7wdr3o>

- People living near data centres experience significant noise pollution which has an impact on communities, mental and physical health etc. This Guardian article is just one of many where people are expressing the distressing impacts of data centres on community.⁵

Ensuring data centres do not exacerbate the housing crisis:

- Modelling from Barrenjoy suggests that the work force required to build data centres will be diverted from building homes and further exacerbate the cost of housing in Australia.⁶ Building labour is a public resource and in a housing crisis this diversion is unacceptable.

Ensuring transparent public disclosure of resource consumption:

- Data centres globally are notorious for under-reporting resource consumption according to a recent report from GPAP.⁷ This could have significant implications for grid management, water management and the health of Tasmanians.

Ensuring that the Tasmanian community receive tangible benefits:

- There are likely to be very few tangible benefits for Tasmanian's from these projects. As noted above, construction work is likely to be diverted from other more pressing projects and the social and environmental consequences of these behemoths are high. As it stands the benefits from increased data centres are minimal and the costs incredibly high. Most data centre growth is due to LLM which are owned and controlled by tech corporations actively interested in undermining democracy, increasing citizen surveillance and stealing the work of our precious creatives. I encourage the committee to truly consider the costs and whether pictures of ice skating cats are worth the losses.

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20/09/2026

5 <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2026/may/03/ai-datacentres-australia-opposition>

6 https://www.afr.com/policy/economy/data-centre-boom-to-put-pressure-on-interest-rates-housing-20260914-p60x35?promote_channel=edmail

7 <https://www.greenpeace.org.au/greenpeace-reports/ai-data-centres-draining-energy-australia/>