From: Jane Papasergio
To: House of Assembly - GAA
Subject: Fwd: Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania
Date: Tuesday, 15 September 2026 10:50:52 AM

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To: The Committee Secretary
Government Administration Committee A
Parliament House, Hobart, TAS 7000

Date:15/09/2026

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing as a resident of East Launceston, directly impacted by the development of Firmus Technologies' "Project Southgate" data centre at Killafaddy Road. I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to this timely and critical inquiry.

The rapid approval of the St Leonards data centre has highlighted severe gaps in Tasmania's current planning framework. Because local councils are legally bound to assess projects based purely on standard zoning, this multi-billion dollar project bypassed a comprehensive assessment of its cumulative impacts on our community infrastructure and natural resources.

I urge the Committee to consider the following critical issues regarding the St Leonards development and future facilities:

Lack of Social Licence and Job Disparity: The St Leonards project has been allocated 104 megawatts of Tasmania's finite renewable hydro energy. While it consumes a massive share of state infrastructure, it is projected to generate only a handful of ongoing local jobs. This represents a poor return on public resources for the Launceston community.

Threat to Local Energy Grid and Manufacturing: Committing massive blocks of power to a data centre strains our local electricity grid. This risks driving up energy prices for everyday Tasmanians and prevents local, job-heavy manufacturing businesses from expanding due to power supply limits.

Environmental and Amenity Impacts: I am deeply concerned about the localised environmental impacts of a 24/7 industrial server facility operating adjacent to residential areas. This includes continuous noise pollution from cooling infrastructure, light spill, and potential toxic air emissions from unpublicized diesel backup generator arrays.

Water Resource Strain: The cooling needs of hyperscale facilities threaten our waterways. There must be absolute legislative transparency ensuring that local municipal water or agricultural irrigation schemes are never compromised to cool tech infrastructure.

Recommendations for the Committee:

Ensure financial compensation to the State Government: There must be tangible financial investment back to the state to reduce our deficit. Require owners of these data centres pay an annual levy. Require 1% of project capital expenditure to be contributed to a State Future Fund.A $3 billion project would contribute $30 million and reduce our significant debt.

Retrospective Protections: Introduce strict, retroactive environmental guardrails and noise limits on the St Leonards site to protect the health and amenity of nearby residents. I hold deep concerns about the nearby aquatic species that rely on riparian vegetation along the **North Esk River**. The river forms much of the boundary of St Leonards and supports riverside habitat.

Mandatory Resource Disclosure: Legislate that all data centre operators must publicly disclose their exact water usage, power requirements, and backup diesel generator capacities.

State-Level Oversight: Remove data centre approvals from local councils. Classify them as "Major Projects" to ensure independent assessment by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The local council is not simply not equipped.

Thank you for considering the serious concerns of the Launceston community. I welcome the opportunity to speak further if the Committee holds public hearings in northern Tasmania.

Sincerely,
Jane Papasergio
[redacted]