



Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Construction and Operation of AI Data Centres in Tasmania

Submitted by: Voices of Tasmania Community Network (Facebook)

Coordinator: Duncan Mills

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Inquiry into: The Construction and Operation of AI Data Centres

Preface: Inquiry Context and Contact Details

1.1 The Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania is being conducted by the House of Assembly Government Administration Committee A.

1.2 The primary administrative contact managing the inquiry and its submissions is the Committee Secretary, supported by the Committee Chair.

1.3 Committee Secretariat Contact Details:

- Committee Secretary: Fiona Murphy
- Email: assemblygaa@parliament.tas.gov.au
- Phone: (03) 6212 2220
- Postal Address: The Secretary, Government Administration Committee A, Inquiry into AI Data Centres in Tasmania, House of Assembly, Parliament House, Hobart, TAS 7000

1.4 Key Committee Leadership:

- Committee Chair: Brian Mitchell MP (Labor Member for Lyons)
 - Deputy Chair: Tabatha Badger MP (Greens Member for Lyons)
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Foreword: Methodological Note and Collaborative Method

2.1 Drafting assistance

This submission was drafted with assistance from Deepseek and Gemini (current models).

2.2 Open and collaborative method

This is a working document, not a finished one. It has been circulated openly through the Voices of Tasmania Community Network for comment, challenge, and correction. Appendix E is a live audit of its own omissions and weaknesses, published in that spirit. We invite the Committee and the public to hold this document to the same standard of transparency we ask of the government and project proponents.

We acknowledge the irony of using AI tools to critique AI data centres. We do so because these tools are useful and the public oversight of them is missing. That gap — not the tools themselves — is the subject of this submission.

2.3 Finding the Truth

Applied science must bridge observed fact and interpretative meaning in complex systems. This bridge is often flawed by interpreters' biases, agendas, filters, and lexicon. Analysts must therefore infer meaning — reasoning from particular to whole, based on similar systems.

This contrasts with reductionism: reasoning from whole to particular. More reliable, but it loses the whole, creating knowledge silos that resist reintegration — a problem for understanding ecosystems and our place in them.

2.4 AI Assistant

The AI here shares some inferential weaknesses, but few human ones. Its strengths are filtering, reviewing vast literature, and tireless instant drafting.

Both, of course, suffer from our framing, focusing, and capacity to ask clarifying questions.

2.5 This submission respects AI's power to assist and clarify thought and communication. Our alarm concerns two failures: governments' failure to enable critical, pluralistic assessment of AI's social and ecological impacts and risks, and the systemic cultural risks posed by large commercial organisations and their backers.

Executive Summary (500 words)

ES.1 This submission provides an Ecological Economics perspective on the long-term consequences of accelerated approvals for AI data centres in Tasmania. Its core position is that imposing costs on future generations is morally unacceptable and legally inconsistent with the principle of intergenerational equity. It argues that the Neoclassical Economic framework — useful only for short-term, isolatable systems with high data confidence — is the wrong tool for this decision.

ES.2 The submission asks the Committee to assess full lifecycle costs using a zero discount rate, meaning \$1 of future damage equals \$1 of present damage. Under this method, no project with long-term negative consequences can be shown to have net social benefit unless all future costs are included. On current information, that demonstration has not been made.

ES.3 Six key factual foundations frame the analysis: (1) data centre demand equals roughly one-third of state electricity use, with Firmus seeking 450 MW and six undisclosed projects adding at least 500 MW more; (2) Bell Bay Aluminium, the largest electricity user at 355 MW and employer of about 550 people, faces direct competition — its power contract expires this year, and the two parties are roughly \$60 million per year apart in negotiations; (3) the 2026–27 Budget includes \$14.7 billion in cuts over four years and 1,700 public sector job losses; (4) Tasmania has more than 650 threatened species and is listed among Australia's most climate-vulnerable regions; (5) Launceston's levee may fail by 2050, turning a 1-in-500-year flood into a 1-in-100-year event; and (6) a parliamentary petition against AI data centres collected over 4,200 signatures in under a week.

ES.4 The SWOT analysis identifies critical weaknesses: electricity allocation is a zero-sum game — there is a finite amount of power, so one user's gain is another's loss — where Hydro Tasmania faces commercial incentive to prioritise higher-paying data centre customers over legacy industry; planning assessment capacity is severely inadequate, with Latrobe Mayor Peter Freshney stating the framework is "not fit" to assess these proposals; there is zero fiscal spillover to public services; and approval speed exceeds regulatory capacity, with six proponents kept confidential.

ES.5 Threats include collapse of the existing industrial base (Bell Bay Aluminium's closure would cascade through 200+ supply chain businesses), irreversible ecosystem damage, a fiscal vicious cycle where the tax base contracts twice over, and flood risk compounding with data centre water demand.

ES.6 The zero discount rate analysis concludes that current approval practice systematically omits or undervalues: social costs of industry closure, irreversibility of ecosystem damage, crowding-out of public services, and intergenerational transfer of climate adaptation costs. The burden of proof should rest with proponents to demonstrate net benefit even under a zero discount rate.

ES.7 Recommended measures include: legislating intergenerational equity into the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Act with mandatory zero-discount-rate impact assessments; requiring data centres to build new renewable energy equal to consumption, not drawn from existing hydro; establishing a Data Centre Community Benefit Fund levied on electricity consumption; pausing all new load approvals until a cumulative energy-water-land assessment is completed; and requiring legally binding power guarantees for existing industrial users before any new high-energy load is approved.

ES.8 Appendices provide detailed analysis of Bell Bay supply chain multiplier effects, Launceston flood risk's intergenerational dimension, the mathematics of discount rate sacrifice, international legal precedents supporting intergenerational equity (ICJ, UNFCCC, German Constitutional Court, Colombian Supreme Court); an audit of omissions and inadequately discussed aspects requiring further development; and key framing sources.

ES.9 Tasmania is at a generational decision point. The current accelerated pathway systematically transfers long-term costs onto future generations. The Committee should recommend an immediate pause on new data centre approvals until a zero-discount-rate

intergenerational cumulative impact assessment is completed, and embed intergenerational equity in the statutory framework for all major infrastructure approvals.

(Detailed submission, approx. 4,500 words, including Appendices A–G, follows.)

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3. Purpose of This Submission

3.1 This submission provides an Ecological Economics perspective to analyse the long-term consequences of accelerated approvals for AI data centres. We argue that the Neoclassical Economic framework is ethically unacceptable for this decision.

3.2 The core position is: imposing costs on future generations of Tasmanians is morally unacceptable and legally inconsistent with the principle of intergenerational equity.

3.3 It is mistaken to use the Neoclassical Economic framework, which is only useful for the analysis of short-term, isolatable systems with high data confidence.

3.4 This submission asks the Committee to assess the full lifecycle costs of these projects using a zero discount rate — that is, not reducing the value of harm simply because it occurs in the future.

4. Key Factual Foundations

4.1 Fact 1: Data centre demand equals roughly one-third of the state's electricity use. Firmus is seeking a long-term contract for 450 MW, approximately 30% of Tasmania's current energy use. With six other undisclosed projects, total demand could add at least another 500 MW.

4.2 Fact 2: Existing industry faces direct competition. Bell Bay Aluminium is currently the largest electricity user at 355 MW and directly employs about 550 people. Its power contract expires at the end of the year, with a price gap of roughly \$60 million per year between the two sides.

4.3 Fact 3: Government finances are already contracting. The 2026–27 Budget includes \$14.7 billion in cuts over four years and 1,700 public sector job losses. Health must absorb \$131 million in savings this year alone.

4.4 Fact 4: Ecosystem pressure continues to intensify. Tasmania now has more than 650 threatened species. The National Climate Risk Assessment lists Tasmania as one of the most vulnerable regions in Australia to climate disasters.

4.5 Fact 5: Flood risk has been scientifically confirmed. Launceston levee modelling shows that by 2050 the current levee may fail, and what is now a 1-in-500-year flood could become a 1-in-100-year event.

4.6 Fact 6: Community opposition is significant. A parliamentary petition calling for a pause on AI data centres collected more than 4,200 signatures in less than a week — described as "an unprecedented number by Tasmanian parliamentary petition standards."

5. SWOT Analysis

5.1 Strengths

5.1.1 Renewable energy potential: Tasmania has significant hydro and wind resource potential that could theoretically support new load.

5.1.2 Existing assessment framework: The NWTG project has passed dual environmental assessments, with design objectives including support for the 200% renewable energy target.

5.1.3 Investment signal: Data centre investment can signal that Tasmania is "open for business."

5.2 Weaknesses

5.2.1 Weakness 1: Electricity allocation is a zero-sum game. The hydro system has finite capacity. Firmus can pay far more per kilowatt-hour than legacy industry. Hydro Tasmania faces a commercial incentive to prioritise the new, higher-paying customer. Energy analyst Marc White stated: "If that energy has to be allocated to local businesses, then you can't do both."

5.2.2 Weakness 2: Planning assessment capacity is severely inadequate. Latrobe Mayor Peter Freshney stated plainly that the current planning framework is "not fit" to properly assess data centre proposals. The legislative framework was legislated in 1993 — 33 years ago — at a time when data centres "would not have even been considered feasible or on the horizon."

5.2.3 Weakness 3: Zero fiscal spillover. Data centre operators pay for electricity and land. They do not pay a special levy for public services. The government has not committed to capturing value through taxation or guaranteed deliverable community benefit agreements.

5.2.4 Weakness 4: Approval speed exceeds regulatory capacity. The government acknowledges the need for more transparency, but the Greens accuse it of "actively keeping Tasmanians in the dark." The proponents of six projects are being kept confidential, with information "not yet available, not yet determined, not able to be reliably estimated, or provided in confidence."

5.3 Opportunities

5.3.1 Opportunity 1: The inquiry itself. The inquiry has broad terms of reference covering environmental, public resource, planning, parliamentary oversight, resource consumption transparency, and community benefit. Submissions close 21 September 2026.

5.3.2 Opportunity 2: Mandatory conditions. The Federal Government is developing laws requiring large AI data centres to bring their own renewable energy. Firmus has pledged to build 2 MW of new renewable energy for every 1 MW it consumes.

5.3.3 Opportunity 3: Legislating community benefit agreements. Convert community benefit agreements from voluntary commitments into statutory approval conditions.

5.4 Threats

5.4.1 Threat 1: Collapse of the existing industrial base. If Bell Bay Aluminium closes, about 550 direct jobs are lost. A local engineering firm has said that if the smelter closes, it will immediately cut more than half of its 80 workers. The smelter has more than 200 supply chain businesses.

5.4.2 Threat 2: Irreversible ecosystem damage. More than 650 threatened species are already under pressure. Additional industrial load — water consumption and land disturbance — will further compress recovery space.

5.4.3 Threat 3: Fiscal vicious cycle. If data centres do not deliver expected tax growth, and existing industry closes due to energy competition, the tax base contracts twice over. With existing debt, this forces further cuts to public services.

5.4.4 Threat 4: Flood risk compounding with data centres. The Launceston levee may fail by 2050. Data centre water consumption and energy demand will intensify water management pressure.

6. Internal Rate of Return (IRR) Analysis: Zero Discount Rate Method

6.1 Methodological Statement

6.1.1 Traditional IRR analysis uses a positive discount rate (typically 3%–7%), which has the effect of systematically devaluing future costs. For example, \$1 million in damage 50 years from now, at a 7% discount rate, is worth only about \$34,000 today.

6.1.2 This submission rejects the use of a positive social discount rate, for the following reasons:

- Moral: Discounting the lives, health, and ecological integrity of future generations on the basis of "time preference" is equivalent to declaring that future people's welfare matters less, morally, than that of present people.
- Legal: The principle of intergenerational equity requires that present-day decisions must not transfer unjust burdens onto future generations.

6.1.3 Therefore, the following analysis uses a zero discount rate — that is, \$1 of future damage = \$1 of present damage.

6.2 Key Conclusions Under Zero Discount Rate

6.2.1 Under a zero discount rate, any project with long-term negative consequences must include all future costs in its IRR to be fairly compared with alternatives. Current approval practice systematically omits or undervalues the following costs:

- Social costs of existing industry closure (multiplier effects, community shrinkage, local tax loss)
- Irreversibility of cumulative ecosystem damage
- Crowding-out of public services under fiscal austerity
- Intergenerational transfer of climate adaptation costs

6.2.2 Conclusion: On the current information, it cannot be demonstrated that the net social benefit of AI data centres is positive. The burden of proof should rest with those supporting the projects — that is, to demonstrate a net benefit even under a zero discount rate. That demonstration has not been made.

7. Necessary Mitigation and Prevention Measures

7.1 Legislative Level

7.1.1 Write the principle of intergenerational equity into the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Act, requiring all major infrastructure approvals to include a zero-discount-rate intergenerational impact assessment.

7.1.2 Legislate that data centre operators must build or contract for new renewable energy equal to their consumption, and that this energy must not come from existing hydro stock.

7.2 Fiscal Level

7.2.1 Establish a Data Centre Community Benefit Fund, funded by a levy on operators based on electricity consumption, paid directly to health, education, and emergency services in affected regions.

7.2.2 Before approving any new data centre, pause all new load approvals until a cumulative impact assessment of Tasmania's energy-water-land system is completed.

7.3 Industry Protection

7.3.1 No new high-energy load should be approved until existing industrial users have long-term power agreement guarantees. Guarantees should be delivered through legislation or regulatory conditions, not left to the market.

7.4 Environmental Bottom Line

7.4.1 While indicators already in decline in the State of the Environment Report remain unrecovered, pause any new industrial approvals that could cause additional land disturbance or water consumption.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Tasmania is at a generational decision point. The accelerated approval pathway for AI data centres, under the current regulatory framework, systematically transfers long-term costs onto future generations.

8.2 The Committee should recommend:

1. An immediate pause on new data centre approvals until a zero-discount-rate intergenerational cumulative impact assessment is completed;
2. Embedding the principle of intergenerational equity in the statutory framework for all major infrastructure approvals;
3. No approval of new high-energy loads until existing industrial users have legally binding power guarantees.

8.3 Transferring costs onto future generations of Tasmanians is morally unacceptable and legally inconsistent with intergenerational equity.

Appendix A: Supply Chain Multiplier Effects of Bell Bay Aluminium Closure

A.1 According to ABC News reporting in September 2026, Bell Bay Aluminium directly employs about 550 people. A local engineering firm has said that if the smelter closes, it will immediately cut more than half of its 80 workers. The smelter has more than 200 supply chain businesses.

A.2 Susie Bower (Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone) said: "We've already been hit significantly by the Liberty Bell Bay closure. If Bell Bay Aluminium also collapses, I don't think we could withstand another hit."

A.3 The smelter is the anchor of the Northern Tasmanian supply chain. Its closure would trigger cascading effects far beyond the direct employment numbers.

A.4 The two parties were previously so far apart that they only agreed to a one-year bridging deal last November, following state government intervention. Nine months later they remain locked in the same stalemate, with Energy Minister Nick Duigan telling state parliament that Hydro and Rio Tinto are about \$60 million a year apart — a cost of \$600 million over the ten-year life of the contract.

Appendix B: The Intergenerational Dimension of Launceston Flood Risk

B.1 The Launceston levee was built in the 1960s. Updated flood modelling in 2019 showed that, due to sea level rise and increased rainfall, the existing levee may fail by 2050. What is now a 1-in-500-year flood could become a 1-in-100-year event.

B.2 Councillor Alex Britton noted that recovery from a 1-in-500-year flood would take 10 years, and that "the economic and social cost would be far beyond what anyone could reasonably quantify." Councillor Tim Walker warned: "If the levee is breached, the cost is enormous. It could happen next week, or in 20 years. We don't know."

B.3 Data centre water consumption would intensify this risk. Under the current approval framework, these long-term costs are not included in project assessments, or as mandated conditions of approval.

Appendix C: How a Positive Discount Rate Systematically Sacrifices Future Generations

C.1 Assume a project produces \$1 million in damage, occurring 50 years from now:

Discount rate	Present value of \$1M in 50 years	Meaning
0%	\$1,000,000	Future damage equals present damage
3%	\$228,000	Future damage discounted to 23 cents on the dollar
7%	\$34,000	Future damage discounted to 3.4 cents on the dollar

C.2 The implicit assumption of a positive discount rate is that the welfare of future people matters less, morally, than the welfare of present people. This directly contradicts the principle of intergenerational equity. When damage is irreversible (such as species extinction or ecosystem collapse), a positive discount rate mathematically "eliminates" future costs, making destructive projects appear "economically viable" on paper.

C.3 This submission argues: For irreversible environmental damage and intergenerational cost transfers, a zero discount rate must be used.

Appendix D: International Legal Precedents for Intergenerational Equity

D.1 Introduction

D.1.1 The short answer is no — there is no binding international legal precedent that mandates a zero discount rate. However, there is strong and growing international legal authority that supports the reasoning behind using one, especially for irreversible environmental harm and intergenerational equity.

D.2 The Legal Foundation: Intergenerational Equity as a General Principle

D.2.1 The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has recognized intergenerational equity as a general principle of international law. This principle creates responsibilities on the present generation toward future generations.

D.2.2 The ICJ's 1996 Nuclear Weapons advisory opinion stated it was "imperative" to consider nuclear weapons' "power to cause damage to future generations." More recently, the ICJ has explicitly invoked intergenerational equity in the Climate Change advisory proceedings.

D.2.3 Crucially, the ICJ has also recognized equity as a general principle from which intergenerational equity derives. This matters for this submission: equity is not merely a policy preference; it is a source of international law that can guide interpretation and limit state discretion.

D.3 The Key Distinction: Rights vs. Economics

D.3.1 The most authoritative support for not discounting fundamental interests comes from legal scholars analysing human rights law.

D.3.2 Simon Caney (Oxford) examined five arguments for applying a positive discount rate to human rights jeopardized by climate change and concluded none succeed. His core argument: rights do not diminish in importance throughout time. If a future person's right to life, health, or a healthy environment is violated, that violation is no less serious simply because it occurs in 2050 rather than 2026.

D.3.3 This is directly relevant to this submission. We are not arguing that future dollars should not be discounted. We are arguing that future people's rights — to safe water, to a stable climate, to cultural continuity — should not be discounted. International human rights law supports this position.

D.4 Treaty Support for Intergenerational Obligations

D.4.1 Several binding treaties explicitly require states to consider future generations:

- UNFCCC (1992): Requires parties to protect the climate system "for present and future generations"
- Convention on Biological Diversity (1992): Requires conservation and sustainable use "for the benefit of present and future generations"
- UNESCO Declaration on the Responsibilities of Present Generations towards Future Generations (1997): States have a responsibility to ensure "the needs and interests of present and future generations are fully safeguarded"

D.4.2 The Human Rights Committee has affirmed that "environmental degradation, climate change and unsustainable development constitute some of the most pressing and serious threats to the ability of present and future generations to enjoy the right to life."

D.5 National Court Precedents

D.5.1 National courts have applied intergenerational equity to strike down inadequate climate policies:

- German Federal Constitutional Court (2021): Ruled that one generation must not be allowed to consume a large part of the CO2 budget while bearing a relatively minor share of reduction efforts, if this leaves future generations with a drastic burden.
- Colombian Supreme Court: Applied intergenerational equity to extend fundamental rights protection to future generations, finding Amazon deforestation caused imminent and grave harm to Colombians of present and future generations.

D.6 The Economic Debate: Discounting as an Ethical Choice

D.6.1 While not international law, the economic literature reinforces the ethical argument:

- Fries & Quante (2025): Show that unconstrained optimization in integrated assessment models (like DICE) creates intergenerational inequality, with future generations bearing higher costs relative to GDP.
- Nesje & Piacquadio (2025): Propose a framework that separates "how we weigh future versus present generations" from "how we deal with inequality between generations" — arguing that time discounting is an ethical choice, not a technical necessity.
- Caney (2008): Directly argues that human rights jeopardized by climate change should not be subject to a positive discount rate.

D.7 Important Caveat

D.7.1 The ICJ's recognition of intergenerational equity does not automatically translate into a legal rule that "a zero discount rate must be used in cost-benefit analysis." The ICJ has not ruled on discount rates specifically.

D.7.2 However, it can be argued:

1. Intergenerational equity is a general principle of international law that Australia is bound to respect;
2. Human rights law supports non-discounting of fundamental interests — the right to life, health, and culture does not diminish over time;
3. The burden of proof should shift: When a project imposes irreversible harm on future generations, the proponent must demonstrate it is consistent with intergenerational equity — not merely "economically efficient" under a discount rate that mathematically diminishes future harm.

D.7.3 This is a legally defensible position grounded in authoritative sources, even if no court has yet issued a binding ruling on discount rates specifically. This is because the neoclassical economics framework treats the interests of future generations as an externality, or as irrelevant. Reason and ethics show that they are not.

Appendix E: Analysis of Omissions and Inadequately Discussed Aspects

E.1 Purpose of This Appendix

E.1.1 This appendix identifies significant aspects that are omitted or not adequately discussed in the current draft submission, to assist collaborators in strengthening the document before final lodgement.

E.2 Omissions Identified

E.2.1 Omission 1: Cumulative water system impacts across multiple projects. While the submission discusses water use generally, it does not adequately address the cumulative impact of multiple data centres drawing from the same water catchments or TasWater systems simultaneously. A system-level water balance analysis is absent.

E.2.2 Omission 2: Specific ecological receptor impacts. The submission cites "650 threatened species" but does not identify which species or ecological communities are at risk from specific data centre locations (e.g., Bell Bay, Wesley Vale, Launceston). Site-specific ecological impact assessment is missing.

E.2.3 Omission 3: The economic viability and corporate structure of Firmus. Hydro Tasmania has stated it will consider "Is Firmus a financially stable company?" as a key question in assessing the 450 MW request. The submission does not examine the financial stability, corporate governance, or ownership structure of the primary proponent.

E.2.4 Omission 4: Comparison with other jurisdictions' regulatory responses. The submission does not reference South Australia's royal commission into data centres or the federal government's developing national standards, which would strengthen the argument that Tasmania is lagging behind.

E.2.5 Omission 5: The role of the Coordinator General and confidentiality arrangements. While briefly mentioned, the submission does not analyse the implications of the Coordinator General's role in facilitating projects while proponents remain confidential, or the legal basis for withholding information from Parliament.

E.2.6 Omission 6: Direct-to-chip liquid cooling technical detail. The submission does not adequately explain why closed-loop cooling is technically feasible but not universally deployed, nor does it analyse the Firmus Wesley Vale proposal's reliance on trucked water as a fallback.

E.3 Inadequately Discussed Aspects

E.3.1 Inadequate 1: Noise and amenity impacts. The submission mentions noise only briefly. The Bell Bay approval includes a condition requiring a noise survey within 60 days of operations, but the adequacy of this condition and the broader amenity impacts (light, traffic, visual) are not analysed.

E.3.2 Inadequate 2: Local council rate revenue and fiscal impacts on municipalities. The submission discusses state-level fiscal impacts but does not analyse the municipal rate base, infrastructure costs (roads, stormwater), or the net fiscal position of local councils hosting these facilities.

E.3.3 Inadequate 3: The "jobs during construction" claims. The submission cites 550 jobs at Bell Bay Aluminium but does not critically examine the claim of 380 construction jobs and 115 ongoing jobs for the Firmus Bell Bay facility. Are these permanent Tasmanian jobs or temporary specialist roles?

E.3.4 Inadequate 4: Indigenous cultural heritage and land rights. The submission does not address whether any proposed sites intersect with Aboriginal cultural heritage or land rights considerations.

E.3.5 Inadequate 5: Emergency services capacity. Data centres may require significant emergency services capacity (fire, hazardous materials). The submission does not analyse whether local emergency services can support these facilities.

E.4 Recommended Additions

E.4.1 Commission or request a cumulative water balance assessment for all proposed data centre sites before finalising the submission.

E.4.2 Obtain and reference the Firmus financial statements or corporate structure documentation available through ASIC. Obtain double-blind independent expert SWOT analysis of Firmus's assured capacity to meet all commitments legislated, including worst-case scenario commercial underwriting.

E.4.3 Include a comparison table of regulatory responses in South Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria.

E.4.4 Analyse the legal basis for the Coordinator General's confidentiality arrangements and whether they comply with parliamentary disclosure obligations.

E.4.5 Seek comment from TasWater on the cumulative water infrastructure implications of all proposed projects.

E.4.6 Obtain the Statement of Expectations for Data Centres (draft) and analyse the gap between "expectations" and enforceable conditions.

E.4.7 Include a section on the precautionary principle and its application under Tasmanian environmental law.

Appendix F: Key References and Sources

F.1 Inquiry Establishment and Community Opposition

- Tasmanian Greens MPs, "AI Data Centre Inquiry Established," 17 August 2026. Government Administration Committee A established the inquiry following months of Greens' advocacy.
- Tasmanian Greens MPs, "Parliamentary Petition Calls for AI Data Centre Moratorium," 28 June 2026. Petition attracted more than 4,200 signatures in under a week — "an unprecedented number by Tasmanian Parliamentary petition standards."
- Pulse Tasmania, "Parliamentary inquiry established into Tas AI data centre boom," 17 August 2026. Ongoing petition now exceeds 9,000 signatures.

F.2 Firmus Energy Demand and Hydro Tasmania Assessment

- ABC News, "Hydro Tasmania to decide by end of year on AI data centre company Firmus's request for 450 MW," 3 September 2026. Firmus seeking 450 MW — equivalent to 30% of Tasmania's current energy use. Hydro Tasmania assessing key questions including financial stability and whether agreement delivers profits for Tasmanians.

F.3 Bell Bay Aluminium Closure Risk

- ABC News, "The collapse of Bell Bay Aluminium smelter could destroy George Town's local economy," 2 September 2026. Rio Tinto and Hydro Tasmania approximately \$60 million per year apart — \$600 million over ten-year contract life. Smelter employs about 550 people with 200+ supply chain businesses.

F.4 Tasmania State Budget Fiscal Context

- ABC News, "Tasmanian state budget 2026: Government to slash 1,700 jobs as Eric Abetz looks to rein in spending," 20 May 2026. \$1.47 billion in operational efficiencies over four years; 1,700 public sector jobs cut; health must find \$131 million this year alone; net debt to hit \$8.4 billion by end of 2026–27.

F.5 Launceston Flood Risk

- ABC News, "As climate change accelerates Launceston's flood risk, some propose putting floodgates on the estuary," 21 November 2025. City of Launceston modelling: under 2050 conditions, a 1% AEP flood would overtop the levees; under 2090, submerge large parts of Invermay under more than 3 metres.

F.6 Water Circularity and Cooling Technology

- World Economic Forum, "What new water circularity can look like for data centres," 17 November 2025. AI adoption could add 4.2–6.6 billion cubic metres of water withdrawal by 2027. Circular water management can deliver up to 75% water savings; liquid immersion cooling reduces water consumption by up to 91%.
- Data Center Dynamics, "Microsoft claims water positivity across data center operations," 25 June 2026. Microsoft achieved near-90% improvement in water use effectiveness since

early 2000s, using closed-loop direct-to-chip liquid cooling with all new builds deploying it going forward.

F.7 Intergenerational Equity and Discounting

- Simon Caney, "Human rights, climate change, and discounting," Environmental Politics, 2008. Examines five arguments for applying positive discount rate to human rights jeopardised by climate change and concludes none succeed: "the rights jeopardised by dangerous climate change do not diminish in importance throughout time."
- Springer, "Open Issues of the Operational Framework of Intergenerational Equity," 2025. Examines Edith Brown Weiss's planetary trust model: intergenerational rights are "generational rights, which can only be usefully conceived at a group level."

F.8 Marinus Link and Energy System Constraints

- ABC News, "Energy industry sector weighs in on AI data centre risks to Marinus Link," 16 June 2026. Climate Change Authority chair Matt Kean states Firmus proposal "brings into doubt the business case for the Marinus Link." Report found only "catastrophic contraction of demand" would make it viable to expand data centre development in the state.

Appendix G: Absurdly Negative Risk/Reward Ratio

Absurdly negative risk/reward ratio, without mandated benefits to essential services; such as affordable housing for all, education, holistic health and justice.

<https://chat.deepseek.com/share/dz3j3g0b1os1az8da4>

Links to all above in:

<https://chat.deepseek.com/share/8n6iak7enys4dvyqtt>

Acknowledgement and Submission Details

The authors acknowledge the irony of needing AI to draft the submission given the complexity of such social-ecological issues.

We also acknowledge that this submission is itself a work in progress, circulated openly through the Voices of Tasmania Community Network and revised in response to comment.

That collaborative method is not incidental to our argument — it is a demonstration of the pluralistic, transparent assessment we are asking the Committee to enable.

Submitted by: Voices of Tasmania Community Network (Facebook)

Coordinator: Duncan Mills

Contact: [Email]

Date: 16 September 2026

Conversation: <https://chat.deepseek.com/share/o4ijwm37w4njx2rglc>

Note for Collaborators: Reference Protocol

For network members reviewing or commenting on this draft, please reference comments by "Voices of Tasmania, Draft; Data Centre Submission; Comment (with point numbers)" via Meta's Messenger app to Duncan Mills, Coordinator.