

**Resolution of the Standing Committee on Government Administration A on
5 August 2026**

Submission to Tasmanian Parliamentary Inquiry into AI Data Centres

Submission prepared by [REDACTED]

The Standing Committee on Government Administration A has resolved to 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;

I wish to petition you, the State government of Tasmania, to take steps to prioritise environmental protection, human dignity, community wellbeing and long-term climate resilience over the speculative expansion of hyperscale AI facilities. There is an opportunity to develop AI facilities in Tasmania in a way that protects our public resources and the rich diversity of our natural environment. With careful planning, strong regulation and greater independent scrutiny, the operation of AI centres could occur whilst avoiding unacceptable harm.

Increasing evidence internationally is establishing data centre expansion, especially large ‘hyperscale’ or ‘AI factory’ data centres, as resource intensive, and carrying significant, multifaceted risks to environmental and human health. For our Tasmanian communities and environment there must be greater legislative and regulatory protection over energy consumption, water demands, land consumption, pollution risks, and impacts on biodiversity and human health.

In addition, AI centres present a real threat to the intellectual property and copyright resources we possess here in Tasmania. There is a great and urgent need for stronger legal protection of the intellectual property of writers, journalists, musicians and artists in our state. Every time a large language AI model uses human created material without acknowledgement, permission or compensation our entire community loses a piece of our collective human dignity. I am an artist and I would like for my creative self-expression to remain my property for the enjoyment of other humans in my community. I do not give permission for my ideas, creativity and creative works to be stolen from me by AI Companies for their financial benefit. Tasmania is recognised as a state that is rich in creative expression, in handing over our intellectual property and copyright to AI companies, we are risking tearing the very fabric of our community connectedness and sense of meaningful purpose. We must take steps to value our creativity and original intellectual property by regulating its abuse by AI companies.

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;

I have always understood the primary purpose of our planning laws here in Tasmania as managing land use and development in a way that balances environmental protection, community needs and economic growth. Having regards to the recent approval and development of three Firmus hyperscale AI data centres in Tasmania, I respectfully submit that the Tasmania’s Resource Management and Planning System is not fit for purpose in regulating the expansion of these facilities. I would even go so far as to say that the regulatory framework that is currently in place is out of date and lagging behind technological advancement.

The Firmus AI Data Centre at St Leonards, currently under construction, was approved without any examination of the cumulative, environmental and health impacts of the development. This constitutes a significant oversight under the current planning instruments with potential for far reaching and devastating harms to our community and our environment.

With direct reference to the Launceston City Council Special Council Meeting Minutes (1 September 2025), the Development Approval for the Firmus AI Data Centre at St Leonards

contains multiple legal errors under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (LUPAA)*, the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 (EMPCA)*, the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme*, and established administrative law principles. This development approval is vulnerable to legal challenge owing to a failure to consider mandatory environmental matters, insufficient or flawed evidence, legal unreasonableness and unlawful deferral of modelling.

Section 51 of the LUPAA requires Council to be “*satisfied*” that the development complies with all applicable planning scheme provisions at the time of decision. However, the minutes show that key environmental modelling was missing and not considered. The omitted environmental modelling includes:

- air emissions modelling
- stormwater quality modelling
- hydrological modelling
- hazard and fuel-risk modelling
- battery energy storage system (BESS) risk modelling
- cumulative impact modelling
- threatened species modelling

Not only does this constitute a legal error, vulnerable to review, it also speaks to a lack of transparency that erodes community confidence in the representative role of the Council. It appears that this Development was approved hastily, without environmental consideration, with minimal community consultation and little foresight into the damaging effects that its approval would have on our community.

An appropriate measure to avoid repeating this legal and planning error in AI Data centre development approvals of this scale would be to consider each application as a Major Project of State significance. To compel developers to provide full and comprehensive independently verified environmental modelling, whilst giving the Environmental Protection Authority regulatory power over the development, construction and operation of AI Data centres.

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

There must be National parliamentary oversight and regulation over the expansion of any and all AI Data centres in Tasmania and Nationally. Further, Tasmania should consider a moratorium on approval and construction of AI Data Centres until we have consistent, enforceable and sustainable standards for every data centre and associated infrastructure.

It has been deeply concerning to witness our local council and the State government hastily approve AI Data Centres with no meaningful transparency and clarity around planning or community consultation. There is a growing sense of dismay and concern at the lack of democratic engagement in the development of these AI data centres. Much of that concern stems from a complete lack of accountability, oversight and transparency.

The Firmus Data Centre at St Leonards was approved in September 2025 by the Launceston City Council. The approval was granted with inadequate environmental and impact modelling, with no consultation with schools and residences nearby. Community requests for transparency and engagement have been met with silence from the Launceston City Council, State Parliament

representatives and Firmus Technologies. There is a sense that our interests as community stakeholders are not being reflected by our elected leaders, rather that the interests of AI companies are being prioritised.

4. Ensure transparent public disclosure of resource consumption;

There is a palpable sense amongst our community in Launceston and the broader Tasmanian community that our precious natural resources have been sold without our knowledge. Our water, energy, land and clean air have been compromised without proper and adequate scrutiny. No details have been made publicly available regarding the nature of the energy and water deals that Firmus has struck. It is deeply condescending and disempowering to be told that we, the communities most affected by the AI Data Centres are not entitled to disclosure relating to resource consumption. Hiding behind the excuse of commercial in confidence dealings appears to be a way of masking information that the community stakeholders deserve to have access to. The minutes of the development approval for the Firmus site at St Leonards refer to the a series of resource related errors and falsehoods. The development application was silent on air emissions, noise pollution and contained errors in the anticipated amount of days that Launceston temperatures rise above 26 degrees celcius. The science is speculative at best, based on flawed and untested modelling and wholly insufficient to warrant unfettered access to our resources, whilst also carrying the capacity to cause widespread harm.

Where Tasmanian government enter an agreement with an AI company that includes any safety, environmental, or “responsible AI” commitment, that commitment must be verified by independent third-party evaluation. It is not satisfactory to simply rely upon vendor self-attestation or vendor-run benchmarks. Please consider regulating resource allocation and consumption so that there is greater scrutiny and transparency around promising our most precious resources to global AI companies.

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



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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

Tasmania sits at a crossroads. It has the opportunity to become a leader nationally and internationally in truly responsible design and construction of AI data centres. Our State has the capacity to harness the technological and economic advantages that AI offers, whilst taking steps to mitigate serious risks to our environment and human dignity. At present, there are a number of AI data centres in the process of approval and construction in Tasmania. These are significant developments being pushed through with inadequate laws to ensure that they are expanded sustainably and with a focus on environmental and human health. The race to welcome global AI data Companies to our state must not be to the detriment of community, human dignity, ecological sustainability, environmental integrity and human rights protections. Additionally, benefits to our economy should never derail our efforts to tackle the climate crisis or the transition to renewable, non-fossil fuel energy. Tasmania will benefit from making considered and informed decisions, taking the time to get regulatory frameworks in place and developing AI data centres sustainably.

7. Any other matter incidental.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please consider my request, if not for my own generation but for those to come.