

## **INQUIRY INTO DATA CENTRES**

**Organisation:** Tomorrow Movement

**Date Received:** 26 March 2026

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# Submission to Parliament of NSW inquiry into data centres.

## Introduction and framing:

Tomorrow Movement is building a youth led movement for a future where everyone can feel safe, secure and supported. A future where our economy and politics works for people not profit, and where we work together to form stronger communities that support each other through the challenges ahead. We have close to 1000 members across New South Wales and strong local networks active in Western Sydney, Sydney and Wollongong.

We are writing this submission to the Public Accountability and Works Committee inquiry into data centres in New South Wales because young people and the communities we live with stand to be heavily impacted by these developments.

The following terms of reference are especially relevant to young people and our communities, and will be covered in this submission:

- (a) electricity demand, grid impacts and implications on emissions reduction targets,
- (b) water usage and cooling,
- (c) local environmental and community impacts,
- (d) land use and housing,
- (e) economic and distributional outcomes of data centre developments,
- (f) governance, transparency and accountability
- (g) any other related matters.

In March 2026, Tomorrow Movement hosted a public town-hall style community event focussed on data centres and possible community impacts in Western Sydney. Over 80 people were in attendance. Perspectives captured from people living across Western Sydney are included in this submission along with a summary of key points pertaining to the terms of reference.

# Material from community meeting

## Community perspective for the Parliament of NSW inquiry into data centres.

[The below are optional identifiers - if you want to add context for the submission you can choose to share. Please only write your first name.]

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Box Hill '2765

Age 32

How will data centres impact your life?

As a Koori woman, I am concerned about the impacts of data centres on Country. The continued expansion of data centres will cause further harms to land, sky & water Country. I am also worried about the related dangers for Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property rights & Indigenous data sovereignty.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

The continued ~~expansion~~ accelerating <sup>negative</sup> impacts of data centres on Country is very concerning. The use of significant amounts of land will inevitably be harmful in and of itself. Adding to this is the requirement for cooling (involving water & electricity/fossil fuels). Noise/light pollution is also concerning. &

Anything else you'd like to say?

I am concerned about the lack of community-based benefits/rights/consultation. On just about every dimension, the risks/costs will be felt/impact Country & community. The 'benefits' are largely for global corporations/governments & their profits.

## Community perspective for the Parliament of NSW inquiry into data centres.

[The below are optional identifiers - if you want to add context for the submission you can choose to share. Please only write your first name.]

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Canterbury

Age 30

How will data centres impact your life?

I am worried about light pollution and being able to see stars and practice my culture. I am also worried about water and land pollution, and what this means for heat in Western Sydney.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

I am most worried about the impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Western Sydney. I'm worried about how this will result in pollution of country and how need for land will impact government action on land rights.

Anything else you'd like to say?

I want state and federal government to have to consult and work with local communities and help them understand the environmental and housing impacts caused by data centres. Data centres are also automated after they are built - no jobs.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb North Parramatta

Age 49

How will data centres impact your life?

I'm a Postie in Parramatta. I spend 6+ hours in the elements.  
and I see first hand the impact of a heating and more  
violent atmosphere. I'm also a non-practising Landscape  
Architecture student. Our overly extracted environment  
can't take any more - and the cost is too great to ignore.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

Our magically abundant sources of energy that took  
millions of years to archive are over. At this point we  
are extinguishing ourselves. Data centres are speculative  
Bolts in our collective coffin. So what am I worried abt?  
More of the same, until there is no more.

Anything else you'd like to say?

This is not all me, and what I want to say.  
It's about us and the conversations we need and want  
to have. There is nothing new or exciting about  
Generative AI it is simply an echo chamber that  
allows us to hallucinate our imagined value.

Speculation is not value  
it is imagined and it  
Results in Real Extraction

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Newport

Age 26

How will data centres impact your life?

pollute the environment I depend on,  
disrupt wildlife with light & noise pollution  
harming the land harms me.  
compromising the health of locals to the data centres harms  
my social connections & me.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

the resources it will use & consume (water, energy, <sup>Indigenous</sup> Land)  
if they will use ai and the negative effects of ai on critical  
thinking, silencing marginalised voices, incorrect information.  
what happens when the centres aren't in demand anymore.  
ice-skating rinks, refrigeration etc are ridiculous alternatives.

Anything else you'd like to say?

don't approve these data centres  
invest in parks, schools, community, hospitals  
REAL jobs (data centres are largely automated & don't  
employ locals)

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb PENRITH

Age 28

How will data centres impact your life?

ON TOP OF THE PROJECTED RISE IN ENERGY COSTS &  
THE LIKE, THE OVERALL POLLUTION THAT DATA CENTRES  
EMIT WILL ONLY NEGATIVELY AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT  
THAT'S ALREADY IN A PRECARIOUS POSITION.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

OUTSIDE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS, THE PRESENCE  
OF DATA CENTRES ONLY ENCOURAGES & PUSHES THE  
USE OF GENERATIVE AI, WHICH HAS ITS OWN  
NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS & SOCIETY AT  
LARGE.

Anything else you'd like to say?

GENERATIVE AI IS A SCOURGE TO HUMANITY  
& COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE AND HAS NO  
PLACE IN SOCIETY, MUCH LESS AUSTRALIA.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Sydney Hills

Age 18

How will data centres impact your life?

- Increased energy & water use in my local area may increase energy prices
- ↳ long-term impact → global climate change
- Heat impacts → higher temperatures
- Pollution in the local area of my close friends & family.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

- climate impact → energy & water use
- Proliferation of AI
  - ↳ unnecessary generation AI tools & their ~~store~~ data storage having ~~also~~ both social & environmental impact locally (+ globally).
- Light & noise pollution for people in the local community
- Air pollution from the diesel machines being built near local infrastructure such as schools.

Anything else you'd like to say?

Stop exploiting Western Sydney land and people! Our communities deserve better.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Cabramatta

Age 26

How will data centres impact your life?

~~With~~ With issues and concerns about the cost of housing & energy bills, knowing how much energy it takes to run a data centre - I'm afraid of how expensive & ~~and~~ unaffordable the future is going to be for my generation & future generations.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

Health issues

Energy issues

Cost of living

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Liverpool

Age 31

How will data centres impact your life?

↑ Power bills.

Government acting not in our best interest.

Land scarcity

Housing

What are you most worried about with data centres?

Water scarcity

Over consumption of energy

↑ Land prices

Light + sound pollution

Anything else you'd like to say?

Stop the stop

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Macquarie Fields

Age 33

How will data centres impact your life?

As an indigenous Pacific woman, I worry about the impacts of these centres stripping and rewriting not only our knowledge but even those of First Nations descent

What are you most worried about with data centres?

about it impacting the environment, the unwilling use of land, resources, water and energy. To continuously construct these infrastructures is to act out of greed, carelessness and undermining the <sup>serious</sup> implications of the future generations.

Anything else you'd like to say?

I'm so glad I attended tonight because I've become more aware of the serious harm of A.I, its use & ~~its~~ ~~cons~~ cons & I'm so glad my education has become more in-depth tonight

THANK YOU to everyone involved in this campaign x

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb WARRAPOOL

Age 31

How will data centres impact your life?

Data centres are building at such a rapid pace and I feel that the government and companies are relying on the community's ignorance and lack of education to develop them, which will cause them harm

What are you most worried about with data centres?

- Health impact to surrounding communities of data centres
- What will happen to empty data centres?
- Is there more responsibility to the harm caused by the data centres? (eg. health impacts)

Anything else you'd like to say?

AI sucks!

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Attarmon

Age 19

How will data centres impact your life?

The next DC data centre on Pacific Highway is a blight on my daily commute. Its red LEDs shine late into the night and are a dark, imposing and ominous presence. I feel a sense of dread when I see it.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Canley Vale

Age 26

How will data centres impact your life?

Our suburbs are getting hotter and our houses are not built for this heat. Our electricity prices will rise with the data centre's power usage, and the rising temperatures will also require more domestic power usage.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

The effects on the planet, our country, our community to our people. This will strip our natural resources. Our resources are limited and not only costly to our pockets but to our finite resources.

Anything else you'd like to say?

We all need a liveable future.

How will data centres impact your life?

Already sensitive to noise at night, ~~the~~ data centres will disrupt my and other people's sleep

What are you most worried about with data centres?

Energy, water ~~consumption~~ consumption, sound, light and environmental pollution

Anything else you'd like to say?

The bubble is popping, by the time the places are built, demand is going to disappear. See OpenAI ~~and~~ with some, microsoft lack of adoption. E-waste is real

First name \_

Suburb Colo

Age 65

How will data centres impact your life?

AI impacts, including energy use and climate implication  
from data processing

What are you most worried about with data centres?

Facilitating AI = job losses, disempowering individuals  
and communities, rich + powerful =  
repression & surveillance

Anything else you'd like to say?

It's scary. I'm glad I'm not 20 years old.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Canterbury

Age 26

How will data centres impact your life?

- The increase in data centres is attacking Indigenous land rights and sovereignty. Increased energy prices, health impacts on my communities, increased housing prices.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

- Noise and light pollution
- Environmental damage: Cost to Country!!
- Prioritising data centres over human and environmental rights e.g. housing, social infrastructure, sovereignty
- Increased policing, surveillance and criminalisation
- E-waste, water security

Anything else you'd like to say?

Indigenous voices must be centred and lead the decisions around data centres and AI in Australia. Just because we have the technology, doesn't mean it's the right choice to use it or sacrifice country and people to have it.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Flomsky

Age 25

What are you most worried about with data centres?

I'm concerned about the electricity consumption and how this may affect our emissions reduction targets.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb Chipping Norton

Age 25

How will data centres impact your life?

They limit the amount of green spaces that will be available for the local community, as well as increasing the temperatures around me. Also the use of all the available water and energy from the grid.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

Worried about the urban heat effect on the local community and beyond, as well as the unsustainable resource use that is required for running these data centres. Also, no far future thinking about the use of these warehouses if these properties don't end up being used

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb O

Age 50

How will data centres impact your life?

ent. impact.  
overrunning capacity  
power use and b.Us & loads

What are you most worried about with data centres?

environmental impact

Anything else you'd like to say?

AI bubble causing environmental and job loss impacts without planning.

First name \_\_\_\_\_  
Suburb Kingsford  
Age 21

How will data centres impact your life?

- ★ They will use up <sup>portable</sup> water we need to live.
- ★ It will make Kemp Creek and Marsden Park unliveable.
- ★ It will mean you have given up on the human population.

What are you most worried about with data centres?

- ★ Poisonous pollution that will last for generations, that is already occurring to Black towns in Tennessee
- ★ The excuse that people will use to "rightfully" use AI since the data centre exists

Anything else you'd like to say?

- ★ The intellectual decline of our country has already been apparent since the beginning of the Covid era.
- ★ If you want Australians stupider, you've got it. Bravo.

First name \_\_\_\_\_  
Suburb West Pymble  
Age 26

How will data centres impact your life?

- Climate change ~~impacts~~ / environment impacts -
- ~~Overreliance on AI and its impacts on the brain~~ Resource usage e.g. water
- ~~Creative / cultural threat~~
- Energy usage.
- ~~Potential job loss~~

What are you most worried about with data centres?

- ~~Intellectual usage~~ Climate change / environment impacts

# Community: “local environmental and community impacts”

- Backup diesel generators built to power large data centres in case of energy shortages have been shown to increase pollution impact on communities in California<sup>1</sup>. Diesel generators generate harmful pollutants such as suspended atmospheric particulates (PM2.5), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen oxides.
  - A case study: the proposed Mamre Road Data Centre will be located next to two local schools. Backup diesel generators built in the center will generate harmful and toxic matter and will cause pollution, contributing to asthma-related symptoms for local communities.
- A recent study of data centre health impacts in the US has found that “the growing demand for AI is projected to push the total annual public health burden of U.S. data centers up to more than \$20 billion in 2028 ... the public health costs are more felt in disadvantaged communities” (Han et al., 2025)<sup>2</sup>.
  - With three of the largest data centres in the Southern Hemisphere (Marsden Park, Eastern Creek and Mamre Road) being proposed or being built in Western Sydney there is community concern that this area of the city is being used as a dumping ground for polluting industry.
- Local health experts have already objected to large data centre developments in Western Sydney. An example case study: the Western Sydney Local Health District has objected to construction of a large data centre in Marsden Park for the following reasons:
  - “The proposed development is too close to vulnerable residential communities.
  - The proposed development scale is extraordinary and unprecedented, the environmental burden is untested and represents an unsuitable risk to Western Sydney communities.
  - The proposal fails to reconcile the extreme heat realities of this location and the continuous day and night operation of the facility.
  - The cumulative impacts of poor air quality, heat and noise can increase the severity and seriousness of symptoms and health conditions. The health impacts may manifest as exacerbation of chronic health conditions requiring higher emergency department presentations and admissions, increasing pressure on health services.<sup>3</sup>”
- Local health districts are experts on community health. If these bodies are objecting to the development of large data centres in Western Sydney this should raise strong concerns among decision makers.

## Community concerns

- Quotes from the public / event here

## Land use and housing

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<sup>1</sup> [Marrinan, 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Han et al., 2025](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Western Sydney Local Health District Submission Opposing the Marsden Park Data Centre, 2025.](#)

## Economic and distributional outcomes of data centre developments

- Data centres in US have been sitting in idle after being built because there is not enough energy to run the centre

## Water: “water usage and cooling”

- Data centres need huge amounts of water for cooling. Large data centres need up to 40 million litres a day, equivalent to the daily usage of 80,000 households<sup>4</sup>.
- Currently in Sydney at least 89 data centres are drawing directly from the public drinking water supply. Data centres are forecast to make up 25% of the total water demand for Sydney by 2035<sup>5</sup>
  - Climate change will reduce water availability, intensify heatwaves and droughts and increase risk of contamination across Sydney<sup>6</sup>. Considering this, the prospect of ¼ of the city's public water supply being funnelled to run data centres is highly alarming.
  - Any water shortages will be especially felt in Western Sydney which will experience increasingly frequent and severe heatwaves in the coming decades.

## Energy: “electricity demand, grid impacts and implications on emissions reduction targets”

- A 1GW data centre, like the one proposed in Mamre Road in Sydney’s west, would use almost half the power from Victoria’s Loy Yang A coal power plant if both ran at full capacity<sup>7</sup>
  - Energy generation in Australia is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions contribute to climate change. Climate change is leading to worsening heatwaves which are most keenly felt in Western Sydney.
- It is not clear how domestic power bills will be affected by the energy demands of data centres. Some data centres in the US have pushed prices 267% higher for local residents<sup>8</sup>
  - Again, communities closest to these facilities will be most impacted by increased power bills.

## Billionaires/inequality: “governance, transparency and accountability”, “any other related matters”

- The New South Wales government has strong and public interest in ‘building social cohesion’. Large new data centre developments are proposed close to centres of migrant communities: for example in Western Sydney

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<sup>4</sup> [Water Services Association of Australia: Data centres and water in Australia, 2025](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ABC News, 2025](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Sydney Water: Responding to Climate Change](#)

<sup>7</sup> [The Conversation: Can Australia build one of the world’s largest data centres? 2026](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Bloomberg Technology, 2025](#)

- There is evidence that AI, powered by data centres, has a powerful and increasing impact on drawing people to the far right<sup>9</sup>
  - Far right ideologies are linked to violence and hatred of migrant communities - destroying any chance of social cohesion
- There is a significant question whether the communities closest to sites of proposed hyper-scale data centres is happy to host tools used to divide us at the cost of our water and energy bills

## Conclusion

There are significant community concerns with the acceleration of data centre construction across New South Wales, particularly large centres proposed or being developed in Western Sydney. Proponents must be held accountable to the communities they develop in.

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<sup>9</sup> [The Conversation, 2026](#)