

30 April 2026

NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Attention: Planning Assessment Commission

via online submission portal — NSW Planning Portal

**FORMAL OBJECTION — State Significant Development Application Project
Mars Data Centre, Lane Cove West Business Park**

I write as a local resident and directly affected neighbour to lodge my formal objection to the proposed Project Mars Data Centre development within the Lane Cove West Business Park. I am located within 200 metres of the proposed development site and am deeply concerned that this project, if approved, will cause lasting and irreversible harm to the liveability, amenity, and character of the surrounding residential community.

I request that the consent authority give careful and genuine consideration to the concerns raised in this submission, and strongly urge that the development application be refused.

1. My Connection to the Local Area

My family and I have lived in this neighbourhood for 15 years, during which time we have invested over \$2 million in purchasing and building our home. Our property sits within approximately 100 metres of the Lane Cove West Business Park boundary.

In all that time, we have coexisted with the business park and have genuinely valued much of what it offers. A number of family-oriented services and activities are conveniently located within the business park — including swim school, childcare, rock climbing, gymnastics, occupational therapy practices, and virtual golf — all within comfortable walking distance. These businesses as well as the current industrial activities (mainly warehousing) in the eastern part of the business park where the data centre is proposed to be located co-exist with the residential area with no issues.

Apart from occasional midnight fire alarms, we have never had significant complaints about the business park. We have been responsible, long-term residents who have invested in this community and have accepted a degree of industrial noise and activity as part of living adjacent to the Business Park. However, the Project Mars Data Centre is categorically different from anything previously approved in this precinct — in scale, in intensity, in hours of operation, and in its impacts on the people who live next to it.

It is also worth noting that the Lane Cove Local Environmental Plan (2009) sets out clear objectives for land zoned E4 General Industrial — including that development must minimise any adverse effect on other land uses, recognise the close proximity of the zone to adjoining residential areas, and mitigate potential conflict between industrial and residential uses. The proposed data centre directly contradicts these objectives. The homes on Banksia Close, Avalon Avenue and Wood Street are located on quiet suburban streets with local traffic only — they have no natural acoustic protection whatsoever from an intensive 24/7 industrial operation.

2. Excessive Building Height and Visual Amenity

The proposed data centre is routinely cited in the EIS as being 28.3 metres in height — a 57% exceedance of the current permitted height limit of 18 metres. However, I note that the SSDA Architectural Design Report (Appendix H) cites a maximum height of 33 metres, which would represent an 83% exceedance of the permitted limit. This discrepancy should be resolved before any assessment can proceed. Either figure represents a fundamental departure from the controls that exist to protect the character and amenity of the area.

Currently, from our home, the buildings within the business park are not highly visible. They are appropriately set back from boundaries, and adequate tree coverage softens the interface between the business park and the residential neighbourhood. This is exactly what good urban design is meant to achieve.

If approved, the proposed data centre will be built right to the boundary, with as little as 10 metres separating the structure from residential properties. At the proposed height, the building will be plainly visible from our home and from properties throughout the surrounding street network. In my view, the moment industrial infrastructure of this scale and character becomes visible from residential properties, property values will decline. This is a foreseeable, predictable, and entirely avoidable harm — one that the consent authority must squarely address.

I am also concerned that the Visual Impact Assessment relies heavily on vegetation coverage in its viewpoint photos to demonstrate low visual impact — yet it does not account for the removal of the 90 mature trees proposed under the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. Of those 90 trees, 39 are identified as trees that could not be replaced within 10 or more years. The viewpoint analysis also omits the most affected locations: the corner of Avalon Avenue and Banksia Close (where hundreds of local parents and students walk every day to Lane Cove West Public School), the skate park and tennis courts at Blackman Park, and the decks and backyards of properties on the western side of Wood Street. The Visual Impact Assessment has therefore significantly understated the true amenity impact of this proposal.

3. Noise Impact: 24/7 Operations and Cumulative Effects

The 24-hour, 7-day operation of a data centre at this proximity to residential properties is, in my view, the most serious concern raised by this development. The residential boundary setback is between only 6.3 and 10 metres — a distance that is wholly inadequate to buffer the mechanical noise generated by large-scale data centre infrastructure.

I have a number of specific concerns regarding the noise assessment in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

- The EIS is based on draft and indicative mechanical plant design only. The final plant specifications — and therefore the final noise output levels — are not yet known. Approving a development of this magnitude based on indicative, preliminary noise data is not an acceptable basis for decision-making. The EIS itself acknowledges that all mechanical plant and mitigation measures, including louvres, are indicative and will only be reviewed at a later design stage.
- The EIS does not adequately address low-frequency noise. Low-frequency noise generated by large mechanical plant systems is well-documented in the scientific literature as causing sleep disturbance and adverse health effects, particularly at night. The absence of a meaningful low-frequency noise assessment is a significant gap in the EIS.
- The EIS has not appropriately modelled cumulative noise impacts. The AirTrunk Syd2 data centre, already operational within the Business Park, has recorded operational noise levels during Phase 1 that have exceeded the levels predicted in its own environmental assessment at nearby residential buildings — reportedly by as

much as 11dB(A) at the closest sensitive receivers. Critically, those receivers are more than 150 metres from the AirTrunk facility. The nearest sensitive receivers to Project Mars are less than 50 metres away. Planning NSW's own assessment of the AirTrunk modification found that Phase 1 alone — just 25% of the full facility — was already operating 5dB(A) louder than the noise predicted for all four phases combined, due to chiller fan speeds running far higher than assumed. This is a direct warning about what happens when developments are approved based on indicative plant designs. Adding Project Mars to this already acoustically compromised environment will compound the harm further.

- Night-time noise standards must be applied rigorously. Data centres do not sleep. The noise generated at 2am by cooling and mechanical systems will affect the sleep and health of residents, including children and the elderly. The EIS has not, in my assessment, demonstrated compliance with appropriate night-time noise criteria for residential receivers at this proximity.
- The area around Lane Cove River, Blackman Park, and the proposed site is known to experience significant temperature inversions, particularly in autumn and winter, which can substantially amplify noise levels as far as Riverview. It is unclear from the Noise and Vibration report whether these common local weather conditions have been properly accounted for in the assessment.
- The baseline noise monitoring was conducted between February 2025 and April 2026 — a period during which Interflow Pty Ltd was undertaking continuous and extensive infrastructure works along Banksia Close, Cullen Street and Hallam Avenue, including road cutting, heavy vehicle movements, digging, and day and night construction. This work is not mentioned anywhere in the EIS, yet it would have materially elevated the baseline noise measurements used to assess the project's compliance. The baseline data is therefore unreliable and should be rejected.

4. Tree Removal and Loss of Environmental Buffer

The proposed development involves the removal of approximately 90 trees from the site. This is not a minor landscaping matter — these trees represent the environmental buffer that makes living adjacent to a Business Park tolerable. The existing tree canopy around the park boundary suppresses noise, provides visual screening, supports local wildlife habitat, and contributes to urban heat mitigation in the area.

Of particular concern, 39 of those 90 trees are identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment as trees that could not be replaced within 10 or more years. Replacement plantings, even if proposed, will not provide equivalent function for at least a decade. The community and the environment will bear the cost of this loss immediately and for decades to come. The EIS must demonstrate that no feasible alternative design could reduce the extent of tree removal, and must adequately assess the impact on local fauna corridors and urban canopy targets.

5. Social Amenity and Proximity to Sensitive Uses

The surrounding residential area is a living community — not an abstract planning zone. There are children who play in the cul-de-sac in front of their homes. The street is where neighbourhood kids learn to ride their bikes. Blackman Park — a vibrant sports and community open space to the south of the site — provides recreational amenity for hundreds of local families. Lane Cove West Public School is located just 160 metres from the proposed facility.

A 24-hour industrial facility of this scale, generating constant noise, light, and heavy vehicle movements, will change the character of this neighbourhood in ways that cannot easily be quantified but will be deeply and daily felt by the families who live there. I ask the consent

authority to genuinely consider the human dimension of this proposal, not only its technical compliance with decibel limits.

6. Construction Impacts Over a Three-Year Period

The proposed construction programme extends for approximately three years. During this period, the EIS itself acknowledges that residents will be 'highly noise affected.' I ask the consent authority to consider what that finding actually means for the people who will live alongside this construction site every day.

The construction involves demolishing substantial existing industrial buildings, including concrete structures with concrete basements. This form of demolition generates prolonged, intense, and highly disruptive noise — well beyond typical construction activity. Construction is proposed six days per week.

This will fall on top of an already-stressed situation:

- The area has experienced over 18 months of significant disruption from Interflow's infrastructure works on Banksia Close, Cullen Street and Hallam Avenue, undertaken to service the existing AirTrunk data centre — excavation, heavy machinery, traffic disruptions, road cutting, and day and night construction noise — all of which has made working from home extremely difficult for the duration.
- Council is now in the process of repaving roads left in poor condition following those works.
- The Project Mars data centre will require further infrastructure upgrades — roads, power, water — generating additional roadworks and disruption on top of construction-phase impacts. It is unclear whether water or electricity infrastructure will again require major upgrades to the surrounding street network.
- The construction workforce of approximately 250 workers will require vehicle parking, placing significant additional pressure on local streets that are already congested at school drop-off and pick-up times and during school events.

The cumulative burden of construction and infrastructure disruption on this residential community over a three-year period is, in my view, not acceptable — particularly given the permanent and ongoing noise and amenity impacts that will follow once the facility becomes operational.

7. No Demonstrated Community Benefit

A development of this scale and impact, located so close to established residential neighbourhoods, requires a compelling public interest justification. I have read the EIS carefully and am unable to identify any meaningful benefit that will flow to the surrounding residential community from this proposal. There is no community infrastructure contribution, no improvement to local amenity, no employment outcome that meaningfully benefits local residents, and no mitigation measure that adequately addresses the impacts identified.

Data centres serve the digital economy and their corporate proponents. They are not community assets. The burden of this development — noise, loss of trees and habitat, construction disruption, visual impact, air quality risks, and declining property values — will be borne entirely by the residential community immediately adjacent to the site. This is an inequitable outcome and should not be endorsed by a consent authority acting in the public interest.

8. Summary and Request

For the reasons set out above, I formally and strongly object to the Project Mars Data Centre development application. I respectfully urge the Department to:

- Refuse consent to this application as submitted;
- Require a comprehensive, peer-reviewed cumulative noise assessment that addresses low-frequency noise, night-time impacts, temperature inversion conditions, and the existing exceedances already recorded at the AirTrunk Syd2 facility — and that does not rely on the contaminated baseline monitoring period;
- Require the applicant to clarify and reconcile the conflicting height figures cited in the EIS (28.3m) and the Architectural Design Report (33m), and demonstrate through independent assessment that no alternative design could achieve the project's objectives within permitted height limits;
- Require a revised Visual Impact Assessment that accounts for the removal of all 90 trees and includes viewpoints from the most affected residential locations, Blackman Park, and the school walking routes;
- Require a cumulative air quality assessment that properly addresses the risk of concurrent emergency generator operation across multiple data centres in the precinct, and propose mitigation measures commensurate with that risk;
- Give serious consideration to whether a minimum separation distance policy between data centres and residential areas is required before further approvals are granted in this precinct; and
- Give genuine weight to the cumulative impact of construction disruption on a community that has already endured years of infrastructure works associated with the existing data centre in the Business Park.

I am willing to be contacted to discuss any aspect of this submission further, and I request to be notified of all correspondence, hearings, and determinations relating to this application.