

Attention: Patrick Copas,
Department of Planning and Environment.

Dear Mr. Copas,

**Re: Objection to the Environmental Impact Statement for the Project Mars Data Centre,
12 Mars Road, Lane Cove West (SSD-82052708)**

I am writing to oppose the Project Mars Data Centre proposal. I have lived in Lane Cove West for 35 years, raising four children. I know many people in the community and have grandchildren attending the Lane Cove West Primary School, which is close to the proposed data centre and would expose the children to noise and toxic emissions.

Please, decline this application.

My home is 65 metres from the proposed site. I have had a look at the EIS (and my husband has been reviewing it in detail) and we are troubled by what it contains. There do not appear to be any benefits for the local community, the environment or for the people who will lose their jobs in the existing businesses on the proposed site of the data centre. Instead we will get an unprecedented new 24 hour per day, year-round noise problem, massive pollution risks and serious environmental damage, including the loss of many mature trees in the area that are a visual screen, softening the current business buildings and providing habitat for local fauna. Somehow, the EIS manages to conclude that this will improve our lifestyle. I feel quite angry to read such manipulative nonsense about a proposal that will threaten our health and wellbeing.

I will only raise issues from the Project Mars proposal that are of greatest concern to me. I have tried to summarise my main concerns below.

Chronic noise

I am very worried our area is going to be inflicted with 24/7 noise. How loud is it actually going to be? The EIS says we will hear it, but the sound won't worry *most* of us. Really? What about the people who are noise sensitive? For instance, I am sure this will really distress my husband who is sensitive to noise, which affects his mood and wellbeing. In the light of what has happened at the AirTrunk data centre at the western end of the Business Park, the EIS provides no comfort. A walk along the Lane Cove River exposes one to the noise from the AirTrunk data centre; it is very concerning. I struggle to imagine that anybody could think that exposing people to that noise, constantly in their homes is a decent thing to do when there are alternative sites, away from residential areas.

We have lived in the area a long time and invested in our home to provide a good environment for our children, and this was a great place for them to grow up. What will

families do now? I think the Project Mars proposal must be causing great anxiety, even dread, for people in the community.

Lane Cove Council's submission opposing this proposal makes it clear that the proposal is not consistent with the zoning of the Business Park, the purpose of which is to preserve space in our communities for local employment and small businesses to operate. I have read the Environmental Impact Statement as carefully as I am able, and I have sought to understand its technical assessments. What I have found troubles me greatly; not only because of what the EIS says, but because of what it leaves out, glosses over, and gets wrong. I am placing considerable trust in your Department to scrutinise this proposal with the rigour that our community deserves.

In summary: this proposal breaches existing planning restrictions, contradicts the purpose of the site's zoning, and would inflict permanent harm on a residential area, a primary school, a childcare centre, and a much-loved sport and recreational park. The case made in the EIS does not withstand scrutiny.

Please decline this proposal.

The site is too close to homes, schools and parkland

There are 127 homes within 150 metres of the proposed site, the closest is just 25 metres away. Lane Cove West Primary School, the Mindchamps Early Learning Centre, and Blackman Park are all within a 150m radius of the proposed data centre, according to the EIS. Whatever the economic arguments in favour of this development, a hyper-scale data centre running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year, is simply not compatible with this setting.

I have looked at how other countries are handling this. In the United States of America, where communities have been living with the consequences of poorly sited data centres for years, the regulatory response has been to insist on much greater distance from residential areas. In April 2026, planning guidelines published by the Chester and Montgomery County Planning Commissions classified hyper-scale data centres as appropriate only for **heavy industrial settings**, with a minimum distance of 305 metres from homes and an outright prohibition within 152 metres. Project Mars proposes to build 25 metres from someone's front door. I do not believe this proposal would be approved anywhere in the USA today.

I understand that Australia has no equivalent framework. I would ask the Department to consider whether it is wise to approve a development that more experienced regulators would reject, and to think carefully about what precedent that sets for this and other communities that will live with the consequences.

The noise impacts on health and daily life have been seriously underestimated

Noise is my greatest concern. Lane Cove West is a busy suburb during the day, with noise from users of Blackman Park and traffic in the area as well as planes flying over the edge of the suburb and we have always accepted that. But our evenings are more peaceful and our nights are quiet, after the Sydney Airport curfew comes into effect. If this facility is built, our health will be permanently at risk and there will be nothing anyone can do about it.

The noise assessment cannot be relied upon

The Noise and Vibration Assessment lists the key cooling equipment, the main source of noise, as “Example Units”, and acknowledges that the “exact requirements for all mechanical plant would be determined as the project progresses” (Noise Report 4.2.1.4, p.33). In plain terms: the noise assessment may have been based on equipment that may not be what is actually installed.

We have a local example of what happens when assumptions prove wrong. The AirTrunk data centre at the western end of the Business Park is already exceeding noise compliance levels, day and night, because its cooling fans must spin faster than the modelling assumed. One wrong assumption has made all the predictions worthless. I am deeply concerned that Project Mars is being assessed in the same way, with the same risks, on a site even closer to people’s homes.

The application of noise standards is not adequate for data centres

Data centres generate two types of noise that standard measurements struggle to capture: tonal noise from electrical substations, and low frequency noise from cooling plant machinery. The NSW Noise Policy for Industry allows for correction penalties for tonal and low frequency noise. The Noise Assessment for Project Mars applies no corrections and offers no explanation for why this is not done.

If appropriate corrections of 7 dB(A) were applied, the assessment would show:

- Noise criteria exceeded in the NCA01 and NCA02 residential areas at all times of day and night
- Noise criteria exceeded in NCA03 residential areas at night
- Sleep Disturbance Screening Levels exceeded in NCA01 and NCA02

A properly conducted noise assessment would not support this project.

What chronic noise does to people

The research on this is clear and consistent. Constant noise, especially at night, causes sleep disruption, chronic stress, elevated blood pressure and cardiovascular harm. These conditions lead to disturbances of mood and a deterioration of mental health. For children, constant noise and sleep disturbance impairs concentration and learning. My grandchildren

walk past this site every school day and then spend their time at school subjected to constant tonal and low frequency noise. I do not think it is unreasonable to ask that a facility generating that noise be located somewhere that does not affect children. We have learned that exposure to environmental harm can have a lasting impact on children, let's not make the same mistake with chronic exposure to noise disturbance for the children of Lane Cove West.

Once this facility is built, residents will have no remedy. A \$798 million mission-critical installation will not get switched off because neighbours are losing sleep.

The noise assessment for the area that contains my home was done in the back yard of a house that is down the hill from my home and well below the proposed site for Project Mars. My home has direct line of sight to the proposed Project Mars site. We have experienced noise from the Business Park in the past, therefore I am very concerned about the impact of noise from this project and I do not believe that the Noise Assessment has captured that risk appropriately.

Air quality risks near homes and a primary school are being dismissed

When there is a power outage, the Project Mars diesel generators will start up. The EIS assesses the likelihood of this happening based on the 10-year outage experience of a facility at Eastern Creek, not Lane Cove West, which has a considerably worse record of supply reliability. After the storms of 2020, many residents here were without power for up to seven days. Ausgrid holds the outage data for this area; it should have been used but it was not; Eastern Creek has no relevance for a development in Lane Cove West.

On the basis of the Eastern Creek comparison, the EIS concludes that outages will be rare and brief, and therefore that air quality monitoring and mitigation measures are unnecessary. This reasoning is circular. The facility will hold 1.05 million litres of diesel on site, enough to run generators for 1.2 days (Air Quality Impact Assessment 6.2.3, Table 12, p.37). In the event of a prolonged outage, diesel exhaust will be discharged into a residential area containing a primary school and a childcare centre, with no monitoring equipment and no mitigation measures in place. This is not acceptable, as we know that diesel fumes are toxic and children are especially sensitive.

The environmental losses are substantial and permanent

Ninety trees will be removed

The proposal requires the removal of 90 trees, many of them mature and many on the skyline for local residents. These trees sit at the top of the slope between the Business Park and the surrounding neighbourhood. They are the primary visual and acoustic screen that currently softens the boundary between industry activity and homes. They will not grow back within any timeframe that will help the people living here now.

What makes this harder to accept is that the Visual Impact Assessment does not model the effect of their removal. The “after” images in the report still show the existing tree line as a screen, a screen that will no longer be there and will take many years to grow back if they are replaced at the conclusion of the building phase. The assessment is misleading on this point.

Homes and parkland are not properly assessed

The Visual Impact Assessment provides a single photomontage, taken from the entrance of Lloyd Rees Drive. The many homes on Wood Street, south of Lloyd Rees Drive, with direct sightlines to the site are dismissed as experiencing “low impact” (EIS 6.2.1, p.60) without any visual modelling to support that claim. The eastern end of Blackman Park, 25 metres from Project Mars, where families with children spend their weekends, is not assessed at all.

Fire risk and the safety of nearby residents

The facility will contain 198,000 kilograms of lithium-ion batteries. Battery fires are not theoretical; they have destroyed cargo ships, damaged residential buildings and caused major evacuations. The EIS implies compliance with relevant fire safety standards but acknowledges that certain requirements “have been omitted” because those standards were written for USA conditions. I do not have the expertise to evaluate this risk fully, but I would ask the Department to require a plain-language answer to a simple question: if a serious fire broke out in the battery storage area, what would happen to the surrounding streets, to Blackman Park, and to the Lane Cove River?

These concerns all suggest that Project Mars is a threat to climate resilience in this area.

Being “mission critical” means residents will always come last

The EIS is candid about this, if nothing else. It states that the facility will be permitted to exceed noise limits during emergencies, and that “it is not considered reasonable for the development to be required to meet the operational noise criteria during this infrequent emergency scenario” (EIS 6.9.2, p.100). No explanation is offered for why it is not reasonable, especially as an emergency is defined as any event that interferes with the operation of the data centre.

I have already experienced what this means in practice. A cabling crew opened a pit directly outside my home and operated a noisy, engine-driven winch at 3:30 am. When we followed this up, we were told it was emergency work for the AirTrunk data centre, that the company had fixed restoration timelines to meet, and that they had permission to carry out work at any hour of the day or night.

If mission-critical facilities are permitted to override residents’ right to sleep whenever they declare an emergency, the answer is not to locate these facilities near to homes. Sydney is a large city; there are industrial areas where this kind of facility would cause no harm to anyone. The Business Park in Lane Cove West is not one of these areas.

The cumulative impact of a data centre cluster has not been examined

A proposal for a data centre 50% larger than Project Mars is now on public exhibition for the site next door, and we understand that further applications are being prepared. If these are approved, the Business Park would become a data centre cluster. Yet each application is being assessed as if it exists in isolation; as if the noise, exhaust fumes, visual impact and environmental effects of multiple facilities operating simultaneously simply do not need to be considered together.

I would ask the Department to consider the full picture before approving any individual component of it.

The claimed benefits do not justify the cost to this community

The EIS asserts significant economic benefits from the \$798.3 million investment. I understand that most of the major components; computer equipment, cooling systems, backup generators, batteries, will be imported. This substantial part of the investment will not help locals or the Australian economy. Once running, the financial returns will accrue to Goodman's shareholders. The local economy may receive some benefit from a construction period, and then 26 permanent jobs. Against this, an estimated 220 existing jobs will be lost from the Project Mars site and the gradual conversion of the Business Park to data centre use risks taking away the small businesses, cafés, gyms and childcare services that depend on the current workforce.

The EIS concludes there will be a "low positive impact" on the way of life of the Lane Cove community. I have lived here for 35 years. I find that conclusion extraordinary. Thirty-four months of construction noise and disruption, followed by decades of 24/7 noise, periodic diesel exhaust, towering structures that breach height limits, and the loss of 90 trees; this is not a positive impact. It is a fundamental and irreversible change to the character of this neighbourhood and a risk to our health.

I want to be fair about this. I understand that we need data centres; I am not opposed to them in principle. But all of the economic benefits claimed for this project could be achieved by locating an equivalent facility in a heavy industrial area, away from homes and schools. Goodman has acknowledged it only considered sites within its existing portfolio. That is an understandable commercial decision, it should not, however, be at the expense of the community.

Conclusion

I have watched this neighbourhood grow and change over the years that I have lived here. I have seen families move in, children thrive, and the community enjoy the vibrant sporting and recreational hub at Blackman Park. The people who live here have invested not just money but years of their lives in this community. What is being proposed would

permanently damage the lives that they have built, and once it is approved, there is no going back.

The Noise and Visual Impact assessments are unreliable and do not accurately reflect the reality for the residents, the school, the childcare centre and the park. The air quality risks have been minimised on the basis of the wrong risk data. The environmental losses and negative impact on climate resilience in this area, and the negative health impacts caused by noise and pollution, have been inadequately weighed or are completely disregarded against benefits that will flow mostly to a listed property company's shareholders.

The NSW Government has stated that its ambition is development in the right places with the right environmental outcomes. A hyper-scale data centre 25 metres from homes with deficient noise assessment and no air quality monitoring does not fit with this ambition.

I respectfully but firmly ask the Department to decline this application.