

To:

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, NSW Government

Subject: Formal Objection to Proposed Data Centre Development at 12 Mars Road, Lane Cove West

I strongly object to the proposed data centre development at 12 Mars Road, Lane Cove West.

Executive Summary

This submission strongly objects to the proposed data centre at 12 Mars Road as it fails to demonstrate site suitability and does not meet the public interest test under section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The project is assessed in isolation despite forming part of a rapidly growing cluster of hyperscale data centres, with no meaningful cumulative impact assessment. Key impacts relating to noise, air quality and proximity to homes and a school are understated and rely on assumptions and incomplete data. Infrastructure capacity remains uncertain and compliance concerns from existing facilities raise serious doubts about enforcement in practice. The proposal places significant and long-term impacts on a small residential community while delivering limited local benefit

I am a local resident of Lane Cove West and have lived in this community for many years. I hold an engineering and two Master's degrees and have worked in the construction industry for more than 20 years. I understand how major infrastructure projects are planned, assessed and delivered. This submission is made from the perspective of an industry professional, a parent and a local resident who will have to live with the consequences of this decision.

I am not opposed to development or technology. I have spent my career working in an industry that relies on progress, infrastructure and good planning. However, I also understand risk, planning responsibility and the need to protect communities particularly when large industrial infrastructure is proposed immediately next to homes, schools and public spaces.

Lane Cove was voted the most liveable suburb in Australia in 2025 due to its safety, wonderful parks such as Blackman Park, rich wildlife and strong community feel. Many families like mine have chosen to live here just because of these values.

What is now being proposed is not just one data centre at 12 Mars Road. Lane Cove West is rapidly becoming a major data centre hub, with the existing 110MW AirTrunk facility, its approved 45MW expansion and three further hyperscale data centres currently in planning, including one progressing through the IDA process, giving local residents even less opportunity to object. Several of these facilities are located directly next to each other, forming a concentrated cluster of hyperscale infrastructure within a very small geographic area close to homes, a school and public recreation areas.

In summary, Lane Cove residents are being asked to accept severe negative implications to their quality of life in exchange for infrastructure that benefits the broader economy while concentrating the impacts on a small and well established residential community.

This development will impose long term and significant impacts on my family, me, the surrounding neighbourhood and the wider community, with consequences that will be felt for many years into the future.

Under the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, including section 4.15 and the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), the proposed 12 Mars Road data centre must be assessed in the cumulative context. Yet Goodman's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) presents the project largely as a single development, without properly addressing the cumulative impacts of multiple large scale data centres operating in close proximity to homes, a public school, childcare facilities, bushland and heavily used public recreation areas.

I have reviewed the EIS and supporting technical documentation in detail. That review raises serious concerns regarding the accuracy, completeness and transparency of the information presented to decision makers and the community.

The documentation appears to downplay the immediate proximity of residential areas, including homes located within very short distances of the site. It characterises land zoned C2 Environmental Conservation as a "green buffer", despite this land not being intended or designed to function as an impact mitigation barrier. The assessment also fails to adequately consider cumulative impacts, instead evaluating the project in isolation within an already intensifying data centre precinct.

Critically, many conclusions rely on assumptions rather than confirmed data, finalised designs or enforceable controls, and in several instances the findings are inconsistent with the evidence presented within the reports themselves. Taken together, this creates a misleading overall impression of the project's acceptability and warrants careful and independent scrutiny before any approval is considered.

1. Misrepresentation of Residential Proximity

The documentation places considerable reliance on the site's E4 Industrial zoning, while giving insufficient weight to the immediate surrounding context, including the close proximity of sensitive land uses such as the adjoining C2 Environmental Conservation zone, nearby residential properties, a school and a large public park.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the suitability of a site must be assessed not only by its zoning classification but also by the characteristics of the surrounding environment and the presence of sensitive receivers. In this case, the proposal does not adequately demonstrate that these broader considerations have been properly evaluated, particularly given the scale and intensity of the development and its location in close proximity to vulnerable land uses.

The documentation repeatedly characterises nearby residential areas in a way that understates their proximity and sensitivity.

For example, the Waste Management Plan states, *“the closest residential uses to the site are approximately 200 metres to the east”*.

The Infrastructure Delivery, Management and Staging Plan, BCA Report, Landscape Report and Fire Safety Report appear to repeat the same wording, stating that *“The closest residential uses to the site are 200m to the east of the site on Wood Street, Lane Cove West and 250m to the north of the site on Banksia Close”*.

These statements do not accurately reflect the true residential interface.

The Preliminary Site Investigation prepared for the project confirms that land zoned R2 Low Density Residential is located only approximately 16m from the site boundary to the east. Independent mapping available through the NSW Spatial Viewer (Six Maps) and other publicly accessible sources clearly show the distance from 15-50m between the proposed development at 12 Mars Road and many nearby residential properties on Banksia Close and Wood Street.

This represents a materially different planning context. It establishes that the development sits in direct proximity to established housing and cannot reasonably be characterised as being separated from residential areas by distance or buffering.

The repeated use of the 200 metre figure across multiple reports risks creating a misleading impression about the sensitivity of the site interface and may have flow on consequences for the assessment of visual impact, noise, safety, lighting and residential amenity.

Can you please clarify how decision makers can rely on the accuracy of the impact assessments where the proximity of residential areas appears to be inconsistently described and the resulting impacts may have been understated across the project documentation?

It is also important to note that the Architectural Plans show the building setback from the eastern boundary (towards Wood Street) by 6.3m to 10m. For a 28.3m high building with generators, rooftop mechanical plant and operating continuously 24 hours a day, 7 days a week places additional pressure on the interface between the industrial use and nearby residential properties. In these circumstances, greater weight should be given to the proximity of homes and other sensitive receivers when assessing whether the site is appropriate for a development of this scale and intensity.

Can you please confirm what minimum separation distance does the Department of Planning consider necessary between a development of this scale and nearby residential properties to adequately protect sensitive receivers, and on what evidence is this distance based? In particular, how has it been demonstrated that the proposed proximity will not

result in unacceptable impacts on health, amenity and the reasonable enjoyment of homes, both individually and cumulatively over time?

2. Downplayed Visual Impact

The visual impacts of the proposed development have not been fully or transparently assessed, particularly from the perspective of nearby residential properties and key public spaces.

The EIS concludes that visual impacts will range from “nil to low” based on a limited number of selected viewpoints. This conclusion is very concerning given the scale of the proposed development and its proximity to established residential areas and heavily used public spaces.

At a proposed height of approximately 28.3 metres (or 33m as noted in some documentations), exceeding the allowable height of 18m by ~57% (or 83%), the development will be materially taller and more visually dominant than surrounding industrial buildings and will introduce a large scale industrial structure immediately adjacent to established residential neighbourhoods and sensitive environmental land.

For a development of that scale, it is reasonable to expect a thorough and accurate visual assessment that reflects the real viewing conditions experienced by the community. The combination of building height, bulk and proximity means the structure will be clearly visible from homes, backyards, streets and public open spaces on a daily basis, fundamentally altering the character and outlook of the area.

After reviewing the Visual Impact Assessment in detail, it is evident that none of the most affected residential properties on Wood Street or Banksia Close, particularly those that directly back to the proposed development, have been considered. In addition, several key public recreation areas that are heavily used by the community have not been considered. This includes the recently opened skatepark (used by many children and young adults), and the tennis courts. These locations represent important community vantage points and should form part of any comprehensive visual assessment.

A review of the selected viewpoints also indicates that minor adjustments to viewpoint locations would provide a more accurate representation of the development’s true visual impact. The examples provided below demonstrate that relatively small changes in position significantly alter the visibility and perceived scale of the proposed building.

It is also important to note that the Visual Impact Assessment relies heavily on existing vegetation to suggest that the building will be screened, yet significant tree removal is proposed to facilitate the development. This creates a risk that the visual prominence of the building has been understated and that the long term visual exposure will be substantially greater than shown in the submitted Visual impact Assessment Report.

Accurate representation of visual impacts is essential for informed decision making. Under section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the consent authority

must consider the environmental and social impacts of a development and be satisfied that those impacts are acceptable before granting approval. Where a development exceeds standard height controls and is located immediately adjacent to residential areas and public recreation spaces, the visual assessment must reflect the worst case and most affected viewpoints, not only those that present the development in a less prominent manner.

View included in the Visual Impact Statement	Proposed view showing more accurate impact
View 01 – Blackman Park lower grass area  Figure 5 Viewpoint 01 location. 	View 01a – Blackman Park artificial grass area  
View 02 corner of Wood Street and Lloyd Rees Drive  Figure 8 Viewpoint 02 location. 	View 02a Lloyd Rees Drive approx. 20m down from View 02  

View 07 from 17 Wood Street



Figure 23 Viewpoint 07 location.



View 07a from between 24-32 Wood Street



3. Noise Impact

The proposed development, if approved, will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a well established, quiet residential area. Lane Cove West vibrant during the day with a local school, families enjoying multisport facilities, bushwalks and the Community Nursery. The area gets very quiet at night and the residents value the natural soundscape, including crickets, frogs, bats and owls, which reflects proximity of bushland and the Lane Cove River corridor. The proposed building will introduce continuous industrial activity into this setting, fundamentally altering the character of the area and the experience of residents during the most sensitive night time periods.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 requires that an EIS contain sufficient and reliable information to properly assess noise impacts including cumulative impacts and address the SEAR.

However, the noise assessment supporting this proposal relies on indicative equipment details and acknowledges that final noise compliance will only be confirmed during the detailed design stage once tenant requirements are known. This means the full noise impacts of the development have not been clearly demonstrated.

While the assessment indicates that predicted noise levels technically comply with the applicable criteria, in several instances the predicted levels are exactly at or very close to the allowable limits and rely on mitigation measures that have not yet been fully designed. This leaves little margin for variation in equipment selection, maintenance or operating conditions and creates uncertainty about whether the facility will consistently meet noise limits over its full operational life, especially at night.

The SEARs require noise levels to be assessed at the potentially most affected residential receptors, not simply at a convenient or representative location. The noise assessment appears to group multiple Wood Street properties under a single monitoring location with no measurements taken from any of the rear boundaries of properties located less than 50 metres from the proposed building. It is also important to note that the presence of a valley and varying topography in this area can result in significantly different noise conditions between homes. As a result, the grouping approach may not accurately represent the noise environment experienced by individual residents. [I respectfully request that site specific noise monitoring be undertaken at all affected Wood Street properties, including measurements at my property at both the front and rear yard boundaries, to ensure the assessment reflects actual local conditions.](#)

Another important concern relates to low frequency noise from the proposed development. The noise assessment explicitly identifies low frequency noise as a characteristic of concern yet acknowledges that detailed low frequency data for the proposed equipment was not available at the time of modelling and that estimates were based on information from other projects.

Low frequency noise is known to travel further, penetrate buildings more easily and be more noticeable at night, particularly in quiet residential environments. There are number of credible peer reviewed studies showing that even where overall noise levels technically meet regulatory limits, low frequency noise can still negatively impact sleep, comfort, cause health related stress and also negatively impact cognitive development and hyperactivity in vulnerable population groups such as children, especially with continuous industrial sources.

These effects are a legitimate planning concern given this hyperscale facility will operate continuously less than 20m away from homes and 160m away from a public school and the estimated data for modelling should not be accepted as credible data to establish acceptable levels of noise.

A further concern relates to the treatment of backup generator noise in the assessment. The proposed development includes a large number of generators intended to operate during power failures and for regular routine testing, yet the EIS states that generator operation during emergency situations is not required to meet the normal operational noise criteria and has not been fully assessed. This means that one of the loudest potential noise scenarios has effectively been excluded from the standard noise evaluation. In an area where power outages already do occur, generator operation cannot be considered purely theoretical scenario. The absence of a clear assessment of worst case generator noise, particularly at night, creates uncertainty about the true noise impacts of the facility on nearby residents.

A key issue for residents is the cumulative impact of multiple data centres operating within the same precinct. The noise assessment states that cumulative impacts have been addressed by applying a 5 dB reduction to the noise criteria in accordance with the Noise

Policy for Industry. While this approach is recognised as a general method for managing incremental industrial growth, it does not remove the need to consider the real world cumulative effects of multiple hyperscale facilities operating continuously in close proximity to residential areas, a school, a childcare and other sensitive receivers.

In this case, the precinct is experiencing rapid clustering of hyperscale data centres, each operating continuously with significant mechanical plant and backup generators. The standard 5 dB adjustment assumes typical industrial development patterns and may not adequately reflect the combined impact of several major facilities operating simultaneously over time. For this reason, reliance solely on the reduced noise criteria does not fully address the broader cumulative impacts on residential amenity and the long term suitability of the site for further large scale industrial development.

Under section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, a consent authority must consider the likely impacts of the development and the suitability of the site, including cumulative impacts on residential amenity and community wellbeing. In the absence of a clear and comprehensive cumulative assessment, it is not possible to properly understand the true long term noise environment or the full impact of this development on the local community.

Based on the above I request that:

1. Updated noise modelling be undertaken using final equipment specifications and verified sound power data prior to any approval being granted. Can you please confirm what contingency or safety margins are being included to account for equipment ageing, maintenance variability and real world operation conditions such as weather?
2. Site specific noise monitoring at representative locations along Wood Street, including my property, is undertaken. Can you please confirm why no measurements were taken at any of these locations and what evidence demonstrates that the selected monitoring locations represent the most affected receivers?
3. A clear worst case night time noise scenario be modelled and publicly disclosed, including the number and frequency of noise events likely to occur during typical operations and taking into consideration the power outages that occurred in the area over last 5 years. Can you please confirm what margin exists between predicted noise levels and the applicable night time criteria?
4. A detailed low frequency noise assessment be undertaken using manufacturer specific data for the final equipment and that a long term monitoring and response plan be established prior to approval. Can you please confirm what mitigation measures will be implemented if low frequency noise causes disturbance to nearby residents and how the compliance is going to be enforced?
5. A full worst case generator noise scenario be assessed and disclosed, including simultaneous generator operation during extended power outages. Can you please

confirm what noise limits will apply during emergency generator operation, particularly at night and how the compliance is going to be enforced?

6. A comprehensive cumulative noise assessment be undertaken that considers the combined operation of all relevant data centres in the precinct under realistic worst case conditions.
7. Enforceable operational noise monitoring and reporting requirements be established as a condition of any approval. Can you please confirm how compliance with noise limits be verified once the facility becomes operational, what independent monitoring will be undertaken, how frequently will results be reported to the community and what corrective actions will be taken if noise limits are exceeded?

These matters are essential to ensure that the full impacts of the proposed development are properly understood so that the consent authority can make an informed decision under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act regarding the suitability of the site and the protection of the long term amenity of the surrounding community.

4. Air Quality

My son spent the first few days of his life in the ICU due to breathing difficulties, which was an incredibly distressing experience for our family and one that made me deeply aware of how vulnerable young children can be. During the first few years of his life he continued to experience ongoing health challenges. As a parent, these experiences have shaped how I think about health and the environment in which my children grow up. One of the reasons our family chose to live in Lane Cove West was the proximity to bushland and green open spaces, often described as the green lungs of the North Shore. These natural areas support clean air, outdoor activity and the wellbeing of children and families in our community, particularly those who may be more sensitive to environmental irritants. For families like mine, air quality is not an abstract environmental issue.

The proposed development includes the installation and operation of 49 generators, introducing a substantial new source of air pollutants into an area immediately adjacent to several sensitive receivers, including around 450 children attending the local public school approx. 160m away, younger children at a nearby childcare centre at a similar distance, many local families and elderly residents in homes as close as 16m from the site and hundreds of children and families who regularly participate in outdoor sport and recreation at the adjacent facilities of Blackman Park.

What is particularly concerning is that the Air Quality Assessment and all calculations presented in this report are based on a facility capacity of 60MW, whereas the proposed development is described elsewhere in the EIS as a 90MW data centre. This inconsistency raises concerns about the reliability and completeness of the assessment. While the number of backup generators is stated to remain unchanged, the overall scale of the facility is a key input to modelling assumptions, including energy demand, cooling requirements and operational context. Where different reports rely on inconsistent project

parameters, it creates uncertainty as to whether the assessment accurately reflects the final design. In this case, it is not clear that the air quality modelling represents a worst case or even the current proposal, which limits the ability of decision makers to rely on its conclusions.

The Air Quality Impact Assessment identifies diesel generators as a source of emissions including nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), sulfur dioxide and volatile organic compounds. These pollutants are widely recognised by public health authorities as contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular illness including asthma, heart disease and even cognitive decline, particularly among children and other vulnerable members of the community.

In response to these risks, many jurisdictions in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and across Europe have adopted planning policies and siting guidelines aiming at separating major sources of air pollution from schools and residential areas. International planning practice increasingly recognises that the location of large scale industrial infrastructure must be carefully managed to protect public health. These approaches reflect a precautionary planning framework that prioritises the wellbeing of children and families when determining whether a site is appropriate for hyperscale industrial development.

The Air Quality Assessment presented for this development relies on the assumption that major power outages requiring generator operation will occur very infrequently. However, in an area that has already experienced numerous power disruptions and where infrastructure demand is increasing due to the clustering of energy intensive facilities, this assumption may not reflect real operating conditions. The modelling further assumes that generator testing will operate for a total of less than 200 hours per year, which allows the project to be treated as exempt from stricter air quality concentration limits. This reliance on a threshold based on assumed operating hours introduces uncertainty into the assessment, particularly if actual generator use exceeds the predicted duration.

This issue is especially concerning given that the closest residential properties are acknowledged in the report to be located approximately 50 metres from the site, clearly identifying these homes as sensitive receptors. The SEARs require impacts to be assessed at the most affected receivers, including those in closest proximity to the development. It is therefore important to demonstrate that modelling has been undertaken using realistic operating scenarios that reflect potential worst case conditions, rather than assumptions about infrequent events.

The report also acknowledges that the baseline air quality environment is already under pressure, with recorded exceedances of particulate matter criteria in recent years. Where background pollution levels are already elevated, the introduction of additional emission sources requires careful and precautionary assessment, as even small incremental increases can have a disproportionate impact on community health and amenity. The final conclusion stated in the Air Quality Assessment that the project is acceptable without fully

addressing the cumulative effect on an already stressed environment represents a significant planning risk and warrants further scrutiny.

In addition, the meteorological data used in the modelling is derived from a monitoring station located approx. 8km from the site. Given the local terrain, including bushland, river corridors and varying elevations, reliance on distant weather data may not accurately reflect local dispersion conditions and could underestimate pollutant concentrations at nearby residential properties and recreational areas. Site specific meteorological analysis or validation is therefore necessary to provide greater confidence that predicted impacts reflect real local conditions.

As a parent, I am very concern about the findings in the Air Quality Report and question whether the site is truly suitable under the Planning Act. Based on this, I kindly request that the following is confirmed:

1. Why does the Air Quality Assessment model a 60MW facility when the proposed development is described as 90MW, and how can the conclusions be relied upon if the assessment does not reflect the full scale of the proposal?
2. What evidence supports the assumption that major power outages will occur very infrequently in this area, and what local reliability data was used to justify this assumption?
3. What would be the predicted air quality impacts if generator operation exceeds the assumed 200 hours per year threshold? Please provide.
4. How has the assessment accounted for cumulative emissions from existing and proposed data centres in the surrounding precinct? Please provide.
5. Why was meteorological data from a monitoring station approximately eight kilometres away used instead of site specific data, and how might this affect the accuracy of the modelling? Please provide updated modelling based on the on site monitoring.
6. If the predicted impacts are underestimated and residents become ill as a result, who will be responsible for the health and financial consequences? This is a legitimate question for decision makers when assessing whether the risks of the proposed development are acceptable for the surrounding community.
7. What contingency measures will be implemented if real world emissions or operating conditions differ from the assumptions used in the assessment?
8. How will compliance be verified once the facility becomes operational, what independent monitoring will be undertaken, how frequently will results be reported to the community and what corrective actions will be taken if air quality limits are exceeded?
9. Who will be responsible for enforcing compliance?

These confirmations are important to ensure that the risks to community health and amenity are properly understood and that the suitability of the site has been assessed in a transparent and evidence based manner.

5. Lack of Agency Input for Infrastructure Capacity

The documentation places considerable reliance on the assumption that adequate infrastructure capacity exists to support the proposed development, even though key service providers such as Sydney Water and Ausgrid have not yet confirmed that capacity or approved final servicing solutions. In several areas, the proposal appears to depend on ongoing consultation rather than demonstrated infrastructure readiness. Without confirmed upgrades, detailed designs or clear commitments from these authorities, these assumptions remain uncertain and difficult for the community to rely on.

The SEARs require the EIS to assess the impacts on existing infrastructure, identify any needed upgrades and clearly show how those upgrades will be delivered and coordinated. While the Infrastructure Requirements Report outlines proposed connections and future discussions with service providers, it does not clearly explain when the required upgrades will occur, who will deliver them or how they will be coordinated with other developments in the area.

Importantly, the report acknowledges that the existing drinking water system has limited capacity to serve the proposed development and may require upgrades to the trunk network. This confirms that the current system is not fully equipped to support the development in its present form.

Sydney Water also notes that the development presents a servicing challenge on its own and that the area is experiencing strong growth with limited system capacity, meaning the broader context of multiple data centres needs to be considered when planning a long term solution. This highlights the cumulative pressure being placed on local infrastructure and reinforces the need for a coordinated approach before additional high demand facilities are approved.

I also request that a coordinated infrastructure delivery plan be provided that identifies the scope, timing and responsibility for all required upgrades, including consideration of cumulative demand from existing and proposed data centres in the area.

The electricity supply arrangements are also still evolving. The report confirms that upgrades to the high voltage network are expected and that the final supply capacity and feeder arrangements will be determined through further consultation with Ausgrid. In practical terms, this means the electrical infrastructure needed to support the development has not yet been fully designed or confirmed.

Local residents have been living through unexpected and prolonged disruptions from water main and fibre optic infrastructure upgrades required to service the expansion of the AirTrunk facility over the past 18 months. These works caused ongoing noise disruption, including at night, traffic and access disruption and safety hazard for school children and local families visiting Blackman Park. Council has confirmed that the works necessary for these upgrades were not presented during the assessment phase of the original development application. This real world example demonstrates the risk of approving

major infrastructure intensive developments without fully understanding the downstream servicing requirements and cumulative impacts on the surrounding community.

Based on the above, I respectfully request that the Planning Department require confirmation from Sydney Water and Ausgrid that sufficient capacity has been secured to support the development, and that any required infrastructure upgrades have been clearly defined, approved and programmed prior to any determination being made.

I also request that a coordinated infrastructure delivery plan be provided that identifies the scope, timing and responsibility for all required upgrades, including consideration of cumulative demand from existing and proposed data centres in the area

6. Significant Construction Impact

The construction phase represents one of the most significant and prolonged impacts on my family, nearby residents and children at the school. While it is described in the documentation as temporary, the construction period of approx. 34 months, excluding any delays, is in reality a multi year disruption. Works are proposed to occur during standard daytime construction hours, being Monday to Friday from 7:00am to 5:30pm and Saturdays from 8:00am to 1:30pm, meaning the surrounding community will be exposed to continuous noise, vibration, dust and heavy vehicle movements for nearly the entire week over an extended period.

The scale of the proposal, which includes demolition, bulk excavation, asbestos removal, vegetation clearing and large scale earthworks across a 33,559m² site, will inevitably generate substantial construction impacts that cannot be meaningfully mitigated in such close proximity to homes, a local school and community facilities. Of particular concern is that construction traffic, including heavy vehicles, is proposed to utilise the surrounding road network of residential streets and passes in front of the local school. This introduces clear and unacceptable risks in terms of safety, congestion, noise and daily disruption to families and children.

The technical assessments acknowledge that construction noise levels will exceed applicable criteria at nearby sensitive receivers during certain activities, even after assumed mitigation measures are implemented. Rock breaking and deep excavation activities, required to facilitate the basement, will also generate vibration impacts that will be felt by nearby residents and have the potential to affect the structural integrity of surrounding homes over time. Despite this, the EIS concludes that these impacts are acceptable, without demonstrating how acceptable living conditions will realistically be maintained for those located closest to the site.

For children who currently rely on the area for sport, fitness and time outdoors with their families, prolonged exposure to construction noise, dust and disruption will materially limit their ability to use these spaces. This effectively removes access to safe and enjoyable outdoor environments and forces families to retreat indoors to avoid ongoing impacts, directly affecting wellbeing and quality of life.

The proposal requires excavation of up to approx. 8 metres into rock to enable the basement levels and associated infrastructure. This represents a substantial and invasive modification of the existing landform. The need for such extensive excavation demonstrates that the site is not inherently suitable for a development of this scale and intensity without significant engineering intervention. Under section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the suitability of the site is a key consideration, and the extent of modification required raises serious doubt as to whether this location is appropriate for the proposed use.

Taken together, the duration, intensity and proximity of construction impacts, combined with the level of intervention required to deliver the project, indicate that the true impacts on the surrounding community have not been fully or realistically assessed.

In this context, the following questions arise:

1. How can the consent authority be satisfied that construction impacts are acceptable when the applicant's own assessment acknowledges that noise criteria will be exceeded at nearby sensitive receivers for extended periods?
2. What specific measures will ensure the safety of school children given that heavy construction vehicles are proposed to travel along local streets and pass directly in front of the school during active construction periods?
3. How have vibration impacts from rock breaking and deep excavation been assessed in terms of potential structural effects on nearby homes, and what assurances can be provided to residents in this regard?
4. If vibration or excavation activities result in structural damage to nearby properties, what mechanism is in place to ensure that affected residents are appropriately compensated, and who will bear responsibility for that compensation?
5. On what basis has it been concluded that acceptable living conditions can be maintained for residents located in immediate proximity to a construction site of this scale and duration?
6. Does the extent of excavation required to make the development feasible indicate that the site is inherently unsuitable for this type of development, and how has this been addressed under the site suitability requirements of section 4.15?
7. How can the consent authority be satisfied that nearby sporting and recreational facilities will remain safe and fit for use when prolonged construction activities, including excavation and heavy vehicle movement, will generate dust and debris in immediate proximity to these areas?
8. Given the presence of multiple existing and proposed data centre developments within the same precinct, how has the worst case scenario of concurrent construction been assessed, and how can the consent authority be satisfied that the combined impacts on nearby residents, schools and public spaces will remain acceptable?

These questions must be clearly addressed to ensure that the impacts on the surrounding community are properly understood and that residents, children and local facilities are adequately protected.

7. Limited Community Engagement

The Social Impact Statement and community engagement outcomes raise serious concerns regarding the adequacy, transparency and credibility of the assessment.

The proponent's own data demonstrates that community engagement was limited and not proportionate to the scale, risk and proximity of the development. The report confirms that only 45 people attended two community sessions, 20 attended an online webinar, 6 neighbours participated in focus meetings, and 57 survey responses were received. In addition, only 3 properties were door knocked in the local area and participation in targeted consultation such as the noise study was minimal, with only 6 participants from 39 approached properties. For a State Significant Development located immediately adjacent to residential homes, a primary school and major recreational facilities, these participation levels are objectively low and do not demonstrate meaningful or representative engagement.

Despite the limited participation, the survey results themselves indicate strong negative sentiment within the community. The Social Impact Statement records that 85.7% of respondents anticipated negative impacts, while 76.9% stated there would be no positive benefit associated with the project. These are significant findings. However, rather than being reflected in the overall conclusions, these results are effectively downplayed, with the assessment ultimately concluding that the social impacts are low or manageable and that the project delivers positive outcomes.

This represents a clear inconsistency. The same document that records strong community concern and a clear expectation of negative impacts proceeds to conclude that the development will have an acceptable or positive social outcome, without demonstrating how this conclusion is justified.

Further inconsistencies arise when comparing the Social Impact Statement with the broader EIS. The assessment acknowledges key risks and concerns, including fuel storage, lithium battery storage, safety and security risks and contribution to urban heat, yet concludes that these impacts are acceptable on the basis that mitigation measures will be implemented. At the same time, the methodology explicitly states that it relies on the assumption that technical reports are accurate. This creates a compounding risk: if the underlying technical assessments relating to noise, air quality, traffic or hazards are incomplete or optimistic, then the conclusions of the Social Impact Statement are inherently unreliable.

There is also a clear disconnect between the social assessment and technical findings. For example, the Social Impact Statement characterises operational noise impacts as negligible, despite the facility operating 24 hours a day and including continuous cooling

systems and diesel generators. Similarly, construction noise is acknowledged as having a medium negative impact, yet the broader conclusion remains that overall social impacts are acceptable. These inconsistencies suggest that the conclusions are not fully aligned with the evidence presented.

The Social Impact Statement identifies a number of positive impacts, primarily including short term construction employment, a small number of ongoing operational jobs, and the broader benefit of supporting digital infrastructure and data capacity. However, these benefits are presented at a high level and are largely regional or industry wide in nature, rather than being specific to the Lane Cove community. The project proposes approximately 200 construction jobs and only around 26 ongoing operational roles, which is a limited long term employment outcome given the scale, intensity and permanence of the development. There is no evidence provided that these roles will be filled by local residents or that they will deliver measurable economic benefit to Lane Cove. Similarly, the broader benefits of improved data storage, digital connectivity and support for cloud based services are not place based benefits. They serve the wider economy and user base rather than the immediate community that will experience the direct impacts of the development. The assessment does not identify any meaningful local community benefits such as improved public infrastructure, shared facilities, or direct contributions that would offset the impacts on nearby residents. As a result, the claimed positive impacts are diffuse, indirect and not proportionate to the localised and long term impacts, and do not demonstrate a clear social benefit to the Lane Cove community as required under the SEARs and the public interest test within the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Finally, while the assessment identifies community concerns relating to cumulative impacts, including the presence of multiple data centres and infrastructure strain, these issues are not meaningfully resolved within the analysis. The development is effectively assessed in isolation, despite being part of a rapidly expanding data centre cluster within Lane Cove West. This omission is critical, as social impact is driven by the combined effect of multiple developments, not a single project.

Under the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements and section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, social impacts must be assessed in a balanced and evidence based manner, taking into account community views and the public interest. In this case, the documentation acknowledges significant concerns, records strong negative sentiment and identifies real risks, yet concludes that impacts are acceptable without adequately reconciling these findings.

Overall, the Social Impact Statement reads as a justification of the proposal rather than an objective assessment. The combination of limited engagement, strong but downplayed community concern, reliance on assumptions and inconsistencies with the broader EIS means that the social impacts of the development have not been fully or credibly assessed.

Can you please confirm the below:

1. How is the conclusion of positive or acceptable social impact justified when 85.7% of respondents anticipated negative impacts and 76.9% identified no positive benefit?
2. Given that the Social Impact Statement relies on the assumption that all technical reports are accurate, how can the conclusions be relied upon if those underlying assessments are based on assumptions or not reflective of worst case scenarios?
3. How can the project be described as having no or minimal adverse social impacts when construction noise exceedances and potential air quality impacts are acknowledged elsewhere in the EIS?
4. In the absence of a cumulative assessment, how can the consent authority be satisfied that the overall impact on the community remains acceptable?
5. What specific and measurable social benefits will be experienced by the Lane Cove community, as opposed to broader regional or industry wide benefits?

These questions must be addressed before any determination is made to ensure that the social impacts on the surrounding community are fully understood and that the public interest test has been properly satisfied.

8. Property Value and Residential Amenity

The proposed development has the potential to materially affect the value and long term desirability of nearby residential properties due to its scale, industrial character and close proximity to established housing. While property value impacts are not considered in isolation under planning law, they are widely recognised as a reflection of changes to residential amenity, environmental quality and perceived safety.

The introduction of large scale, continuously operating industrial infrastructure, including generators, substations and fuel storage, immediately adjacent to residential streets represents a significant intensification of land use. This fundamentally alters the character and liveability of the area.

These changes are likely to influence how the area is perceived, particularly by families seeking a quiet and safe residential environment. In planning terms, this raises a legitimate concern that the proposal will result in a measurable loss of residential amenity and neighbourhood appeal, with consequential impacts on property values for affected households.

Under section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the consent authority is required to consider the likely impacts of a development on the locality and determine whether the proposal is in the public interest. Where a development results in a decline in residential amenity, changes to neighbourhood character and a reduction in the desirability of an established residential area, these impacts must be carefully weighed as part of that assessment.

Can you please confirm, if this proposal results in a measurable loss of residential amenity and property value, what binding commitments are in place to guarantee compensation to affected homeowners, and how will this be independently assessed and enforced?

A proposal that diminishes residential amenity and places the burden of impact on a small community without clear mitigation or compensation should not be considered to satisfy the public interest test.

9. Compliance Failures and Gaps in Enforcement Framework

Recent reporting has identified serious compliance and enforcement concerns associated with the existing AirTrunk SYD2 data centre within the Lane Cove precinct, which are directly relevant to the current proposal. Mandatory conditions of consent, including Noise Verification Reports, a Long Term Environmental Management Plan and ongoing generator logs, have not been submitted or published despite clear requirements and expired deadlines. The Long Term Environmental Management Plan alone is reported to be approximately five years overdue. At the same time, Planning NSW is the sole compliance regulator, with no Environment Protection Licence in place and no independent oversight by the EPA or other agencies. This creates a significant gap in accountability.

The situation is further compounded by evidence that actual operational impacts have already exceeded predictions, with Phase 1 of the facility recorded as operating up to 5 dB(A) louder than modelled for the entire development, resulting in exceedances of night time noise limits at nearby residential receivers.

In addition, concerns have been raised regarding fire safety compliance, including the absence of a revised Fire Safety Study and emergency response documentation despite representations made to the regulator.

These issues demonstrate that the gap between predicted impacts and real world outcomes is not theoretical but already evident, and that compliance mechanisms have not been effectively enforced.

Where non-compliance is identified by the public, there is no automatic mechanism that guarantees the suspension of operations until issues are resolved. This means that a facility can continue operating while non-compliances are investigated or addressed leaving sensitive receivers such as residents and school children exposed to ongoing impacts. These processes can take considerable time, meaning communities may be required to endure conditions that exceed those assessed at approval stage, resulting in a prolonged and unacceptable impact on amenity and quality of life.

This creates a clear gap in the planning system, where the responsibility for identifying and escalating breaches may fall on residents, without any certainty that impacts will be promptly or effectively mitigated.

For residents, this significantly undermines confidence that conditions imposed on new developments will be monitored or adhered to in practice, particularly given that the

proposed facility is located even closer to homes and sensitive receivers. In this context, it is not reasonable to rely solely on predicted compliance or future mitigation without clear evidence of robust, independent and enforceable oversight.

1. Can the Department of Planning explain why the identified non-compliances associated with the AirTrunk data centre have not been enforced, and how it can justify the continued operation of the facility despite apparent failures to meet mandatory conditions of consent?
2. What assurance can be provided that compliance for the 12 Mars Road proposal will be actively monitored and enforced, given the apparent gaps in oversight for existing facilities?
3. What enforceable mechanism will be in place to ensure that any identified non-compliance results in immediate operational restrictions or suspension until the issue is fully resolved?

10. Planning Gaps, National Expectations and Public Interest

The current proposal highlights a broader planning gap in New South Wales and Australia's approach to hyperscale data centres. These facilities are being assessed as individual State Significant Development applications, yet the real impacts are cumulative, operational and long term.

The Australian Government's own expectations for data centres state that social licence is foundational and that developers should deliver positive outcomes while minimising adverse effects on local communities through open and constructive engagement. They also expect new data centres to avoid placing upward pressure on energy systems and to contribute positively to the energy transition.

In this context, the following questions arise:

1. Can the Department of Planning confirm how the proposed data centre at 12 Mars Road meets the Australian Government's expectations for social licence, minimising impacts on local communities and avoiding additional pressure on existing infrastructure?
2. How can social licence be demonstrated in this case, given the strong community concern expressed in the Social Impact Assessment and the proximity of the development to homes, a school and public recreational areas?
3. What measurable and localised benefits will be delivered to the Lane Cove community, including my family, to offset the concentrated and long term impacts of this development?

These questions go to the core of whether the proposal genuinely aligns with national expectations and the public interest, rather than simply meeting minimum technical compliance requirements.

Across comparable jurisdictions, governments are increasingly recognising that the rapid expansion of hyperscale data centres requires careful planning, stronger controls and, in

some cases, a pause on approvals to properly understand cumulative impacts. Regions such as Ireland have restricted new grid connections for large data centres in constrained areas, Singapore has paused approvals to reset planning frameworks, and parts of the United States now apply stricter controls where developments are located close to residential communities creating meaningful separations. These approaches reflect a shift away from simply facilitating growth towards managing it responsibly.

In contrast, the current approach in New South Wales and in Australia risks approving developments in isolation, without fully addressing cumulative impacts, proximity to sensitive receivers or the effectiveness of ongoing compliance.

It is not reasonable for communities to bear the burden of concentrated industrial infrastructure while the broader benefits are dispersed elsewhere. The planning system exists to serve the public interest, and this includes protecting the health, amenity and wellbeing of established communities. The government has been elected to represent and safeguard these interests, and there is a clear expectation that this responsibility is exercised with caution and accountability.

To restore confidence and close the existing gaps, stronger measures are required, including clear separation buffers between data centres and residential areas, independent and transparent compliance monitoring, enforceable real-time reporting of operational impacts, and a coordinated approach to cumulative assessment across all developments within a precinct. Without these safeguards, continued approvals risk undermining both community trust and the integrity of the planning system.

In the absence of these safeguards, it is difficult to conclude that this proposal represents responsible planning or satisfies the public interest test.

11. Prematurity of Determination Pending Parliamentary Inquiry

The proposed development is being assessed while a Parliamentary Inquiry into data centres is still underway. This Inquiry is examining key issues such as cumulative impacts, infrastructure capacity and impacts on local communities. Approving the project before these findings are released creates a real risk that the decision will be based on an incomplete understanding of these issues. In these circumstances, proceeding now would not be consistent with sound decision-making or the public interest. It is reasonable that the project be paused until the Inquiry is complete so that it can be properly assessed against a fully informed framework.

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly object to this proposal and submit that it should be refused as it does not satisfy the public interest or demonstrate an appropriate level of environmental and social protection.

Given the scale of the development, its proximity to residential homes and the significant concerns raised, I also respectfully request that this proposal be referred to the Independent Planning Commission for independent review and determination.