

Submission: Project Mars Data Centre, SSD-82052708

My family and I have lived in Banksia Close for over 18 years. Our home is less than 50 metres from the proposed Project Mars Data Centre.

During the time we have lived in Banksia Close, the Lane Cove West Industrial Estate has had a minimal impact on our quality of life, with the businesses closest to the residential area predominantly operating on a low key basis on weekdays from 9-5. Project Mars Data Centre will have a substantial impact on the surrounding residential neighbourhood operating 24/7 all year round less than 50 metres from residential properties.

I **object** to the Project Mars Data Centre at 12 Mars Rd Lane Cove West for the following reasons:

1. Noise and Vibration – concern over the measurement of existing background noise levels

Given our proximity to the proposed development, in February 2025 we were approached by Urbis Engagement, the company conducting the noise assessment for the Project Mars application, to place a recording device on the property. A noise receptor was placed in our front yard for two weeks to measure current noise levels.

During this period Interflow Pty Ltd was replacing/working on water pipes on Banksia Close. This work, which required excavation and digging, was extremely noisy and uncharacteristic of the normal noise levels in the surrounding streets. The work has been carried out over a long term, starting in about November 2024. I expressed concerns that measuring the benchmark noise level to enable comparison with projected construction and ongoing operational noise was not viable while this work was occurring.

I was told the roadworks noise would be taken into consideration. See sms messages between a representative of the company ([green](#)) and myself ([blue](#)).

February 2025:

Hi XXXXXXXX, this is XXX from Urbis Engagement. I visited you last week to talk about noise monitoring for a proposed data centre at 12 Mars Road. Noise technicians from SLR are hoping to visit your property on Wednesday 26th February, to install a noise logger within your front garden. Please let me know if there are any times on this date that are unsuitable. You can reach me by replying to this message, or calling XXXX XXX XXX.

Thanks,
XXX

XXX this is ok but I'm still very concerned that the ongoing roadworks in Banksia Close will greatly skew the normal ambient noise levels. How are they handling that? Thanks

Hi XXXXXXXX, thank you for your prompt response. We have advised the technicians of the ongoing construction noise, and they are actively seeking additional alternative noise logging locations to ensure the results aren't affected. You are also welcome to ask the technician on Wednesday for a more detailed response.

Thanks, XXX

Oh sorry do I need to be here on Wednesday? I may be out - sorry

It's fine if you're out, as the logger would be installed in your front garden.

Thanks

XXX I'm really concerned that the construction noise is impacting the microphone outside XX Banksia close. This morning they are digging through concrete. How is any reasonable benchmark noise being measured. It cannot be averaged out or it will totally skew the normal noise levels. Are we the only people who agreed to the recording equipment in their yard? XXXXXXXX

Hi XXXXXXXX, thank you for reaching out. I will share your concerns with the acoustic engineer. Confirming also that there are currently noise loggers at three other properties surrounding the site. We have attempted to contact your neighbour across the road (XX Banksia) on a couple of occasions to install a noise logger at the rear of their property, but haven't received a response. Is today the first day since the noise logger was installed that there has been construction work on the street? XXX

There is work every day :(and maybe even Saturday morning

I'm sorry to hear that. We will have our acoustic engineer out and about this afternoon to install a noise logger at your neighbours property. Would you like him (XXXX) to drop by to discuss your concerns?

I have my grandkids here so a bit difficult. So long as the construction noise is taken into consideration. Thanks

No worries at all. Enjoy your day. XXX

Thanks

12 March 2025

Hi XXXXXXXX, I hope you're well. Just reaching out to advise that our team will be in the area on Friday to collect the noise logger from the front garden of your property. Please let me know if you have any concerns with this timing. Thanks, XXX

Thanks

I can find no mention of the road construction noise in the noise assessment attached to the Project Mars application. The assessments of the various noise recording sites mention birds, traffic, planes and buses. However no mention is made of the very noisy road construction that was occurring from 7am-4pm most weekdays and Saturday mornings.

The noise associated with the ongoing road construction was totally out of the normal noise levels in the streets around the site. This puts a question mark over all sound tests carried out at this time. **How was this compensated for in measuring and comparing possible impacts?**

A new noise level study needs to be done within a normal sound environment so the base level of noise in the surrounding areas can be correctly recorded. More sites need to be included. The impact of the topography of the area, in addition to the mitigation of noise by the 90 trees to be removed needs to be included in the assessment of the projected noise of the project.

If the noise assessment is incorrect AFTER completion of the project what recourse do the residents have?

This proposed data centre is NEXT door to residential homes. Noise from other existing data centres has been documented. **Why is this one predicting noise disturbance to be minimal?**

2. Concerns about ongoing noise

Sleep disturbance is of considerable concern to all residents, especially those living in close proximity. The impact of increased noise will be considerable because it will be a centre that operates 24/7 unlike the current use of 12 Mars Rd. Movement of people, deliveries, the mechanical noise of the data centre will all have a significant impact on what is currently a very quiet residential area, in particular on weekends, public holidays and at night.

As the data centre will operate 24/7 there is no relief from residual noise for residents. While the Project Mars proposal is in a zoned industrial area it is next door to residential properties, and extremely close to leisure and sporting facilities (It overlooks a major sporting facility) as well as a primary school.

The report has made assumptions about noise levels and how it compares to existing noise in the area. Section 4.2.1 states:

“The proposal is a speculative development with no tenants committed. The facility has been designed to accommodate typical data centre users. Several assumptions have been made regarding the future tenants and likely sources of noise. These assumptions have been used to develop representative worst-case noise modelling scenarios that reflect the expected highest noise emissions that the development would likely emit.”

For those living in Banksia Close, 24/7 vehicle access in that part of Mars Rd could present issues at night:

“Vehicle access would be from Mars Road. The site would be in use 24 hours a day. It is anticipated that deliveries and loading dock access would typically be via medium rigid trucks.

The main sources of operational noise at the development are expected to include:

- Rooftop cooling towers and other externally located items of mechanical plant*
- Testing of backup generators (see Section 4.2.2.1 for more details)*
- Internally located mechanical plant, such as items within electrical plant rooms and other mechanical services areas*
- On-site light and heavy vehicle movements*
- Loading dock activities*
- Off-site vehicle movements”*

Additionally, the report indicates that they cannot assess noise associated with the mechanical plant:

“The exact requirements for all items of mechanical plant would be determined as the project progresses when specifics are known about tenant requirements. Further noise modelling of all items of mechanical plant would be completed during the production of later noise assessments when the selected mechanical plant is known.”

The report also states:

“Various items of mechanical plant would also be located internally within the data centre. This includes items within the various data halls, electrical plant rooms and mechanical services areas. Details regarding these internal items of equipment are not currently available, however, breakout noise from these items is expected to be relatively minor compared to noise from externally located mechanical plant and testing of backup generators given the internal plant areas are generally separated from the external facades by service corridors.”

A “wait and see” approach to the noise impact of a 24/7 data centre is not adequate.

The implication of considerable “noise from externally located mechanical plant and testing of backup generators” (see underlined information above) is of major concern.

Specific concerns relate to:

1. The proposed substation located in the northeastern area which is opposite L01 and next door to L02 and L03 and surrounding homes.

According to the report: *“This substation would be subject to a separate authority approval, and is proposed to be built during construction of the development.”* **Why is this included in this assessment if it can’t be assessed yet?**

The walls of this substation will be 11.1 m which is considerably taller than a single story house and due to its proximity will definitely cast a shadow over 10 Banksia Close and the Lane Cove Community Nursery.

2. Testing of power generators – nearly 200 days per year there is between 30-60 minutes of testing.
3. Emergency power failure. This is of considerable concern because it could happen day or night. In this event all backup generators would be operating.

Construction noise:

As one of the residents closest to the site, the construction phase promises to be gruelling. As quoted in the conclusion of the Noise Report, residents can expect to be 'highly noise affected.'

“Moderate to high exceedances of the construction noise management levels are predicted at the nearest sensitive receivers during the noisier scenarios, particularly when noise-intensive items of equipment, such as rockbreakers, are in use. The nearest residences are predicted to be highly noise affected when noisy works are being undertaken near to the receiver.”

Construction is predicted to take approx. 2.5-3 years and includes Saturday mornings when traffic in the area is already heavy due to local sport.

Of concern is this statement which indicates some construction may need to occur outside of standard daytime hours: *“Construction of the facility will be during Standard Daytime Construction Hours. Construction outside standard hours will be managed in accordance with the out-of-hours works protocol in a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) prepared prior to commencement of construction.”*

We have to wait and see what construction will be done “out-of-hours”.

Concern about safety:

I have concerns regarding the potential fire hazards related to the storage of:

- Bulk Diesel Tanks
- Li-ion batteries
- Power transformers in the substations

The EIS relies on fire safety being able to be resolved, however key safety documents are not exhibited at this stage, they are required “in the future”.

Visual impact:

The current building at 12 Mars Rd is not visually overwhelming. These photos taken from the Banksia Close side and the Mars Rd side of the cul de sac demonstrate that.



The photo on the right shows the low level of 12 Mars Rd closest to the residential and community gardens. The height of the building on this part of the site is approximately the same height as a residential building.

The Project Mars Data Centre is proposed to be 28.3 m tall and will be a significant change to the view from Banksia Close and surrounding streets.

The Executive Summary states: *“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.”* Houses on Banksia Close are much closer than 250m – they are more like 25-50m away. **What assumptions have been made based on this incorrect statement about residential proximity?**

Environment and wildlife:

Having lived in Banksia Close for over 18 years we are aware of the wildlife that calls this area home. 90 trees will be removed in the construction phase of the project. Some of these have been identified as mature. This canopy provides a habitat for a range of birds and animals.

I can find no analysis in the Proposal of the animals and birds that use this area to live and nest. While the project proposes to replant over 100 trees they will take many years to reach maturity following construction. The mature canopy currently providing mitigation of both sound and light will change. This will impact on wildlife, in particular the nocturnal creatures that will be subjected to a change in noise and light.

Wildlife we have seen in Banksia Close includes:

Bats (nocturnal)

Ring tailed possums (nocturnal)

Brush tailed possums (nocturnal)

Tawny frogmouth – on our fence (nocturnal)

Powerful owl – mainly by its distinctive sound but also seen on telegraph pole in Banksia Close (nocturnal)

Kookaburras

Magpies

Currawongs

Cuckoo

Crows

Lorikeets

Rosellas

King Parrot

Noisy Minors

Brush turkeys

An echidna (recently seen in Cullen St)

In conclusion I do not support the construction of another Data Centre in the Lane Cove West industrial estate and am concerned about the cumulative effects of a Data Centre Cluster in Lane Cove West industrial estate, in particular with one “next door”.

- What impact will this have on power and water usage?
- How has the impact of noise been measured, given that during assessment there was daily road construction works on water pipes by Interflow?
- What are the actual impacts of 24/7 noise on humans and wildlife?
- Why is the height of the development so much higher than the approved limit and what impact will this have visually?
- Has there been a study of what wildlife currently live in the area and will they be lost when construction and their environment changes?
- Will after hours construction be permitted?