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Re: Objection to Project Mars Data Centre, 12 Mars Rd, Lane Cove (SSD-82052708)

The Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society, Inc. (LCBCS), established in 1971, is an independent, non-aligned, community group that advocates for Lane Cove bushland. We object to the proposed Project Mars Data Centre development at 12 Mars Rd, Lane Cove West on the following grounds.

Soil and Erosion Controls

The EIS consistently identifies the southern portion of the site as comprising steep, densely vegetated terrain with limited accessibility. This constraint is further reinforced in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment, which notes that Survey Unit 2 could not be surveyed due to the combined effects of slope, vegetation density, and physical barriers. Given these characteristics, the absence of a detailed and site-specific erosion and sediment control strategy for this portion of the site represents a significant gap in the assessment. Steep slopes are inherently more susceptible to erosion, particularly where vegetation disturbance may occur, and the difficulty of access raises concerns regarding the feasibility, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of standard erosion and sediment control measures. Further, the capacity to rectify issues should these mitigation measures fail in their purpose, and damage occurs to the C2 area to the south.

In this context, reliance on general or conceptual mitigation measures is not sufficient to demonstrate that impacts can be effectively avoided or minimised. This is particularly important given the potential for indirect impacts, including sediment movement, soil instability, and runoff down slope into the tributary streams of the Lane Cove River.

Accordingly, the LCBC requests that a detailed site-specific assessment of erosion and sediment risks for the southern portion of the site be prepared and exhibited prior to any determination. This assessment should demonstrate that appropriate, feasible, and enforceable measures can be implemented in such constrained terrain, and that these measures are capable of protecting environmental values.

Building Height Exceedance

The EIS acknowledges that the proposed development significantly exceeds the maximum building height prescribed under the Lane Cove LEP 2009, with a maximum height of 28.3m representing a variation of 10.3m above the applicable control. While a Clause 4.6 Variation Request has been prepared to justify this exceedance, the justification that compliance is "neither reasonable nor necessary" is not supported by the broader planning context or the intent of the applicable controls. Maximum building height controls within the Lane Cove planning framework are not arbitrary; they are a mechanism to manage bulk and scale, protect the character of the area, and ensure that development responds appropriately to the surrounding landscape, including sensitive bushland interfaces.



While the proponent has outlined a range of design responses, these measures primarily seek to mitigate the impacts of an already non-compliant built form, rather than demonstrating why a departure from the height control is justified. Furthermore, the proposed scale and height of the development, particularly in proximity to C2 zoned land, raises concerns regarding broader and longer-term impacts. These include potential changes to microclimatic conditions, such as shading, wind patterns, and evapotranspiration, which may affect the health and resilience of adjacent vegetation communities. While Section 6.7.2 suggests that the current vegetation community demonstrates resilience to such changes, this conclusion does not adequately consider the cumulative and landscape-scale implications for the wider Lane Cove bushland network, should this development set a precedence for future height exceedances.

Accordingly, it is not demonstrated that compliance with the maximum building height control is “unreasonable” or “unnecessary” in this instance. The proposed exceedance is insufficiently justified, and **the LCBCS requests that the development be required to comply with the applicable height standards to ensure consistency with the planning objectives and protection of the local environment and character.**

Community Nursery

The Social Impact Assessment identifies, through stakeholder engagement (Table 7), that reduced solar access to the Community Garden and Nursery, as well as adjacent bushland, is a key concern raised by Council representatives. This impact is explicitly linked to increased building height, vegetation removal, and broader ecosystem effects, and is acknowledged as likely to influence community perceptions and acceptance of the proposal. However, this impact is not adequately carried through to the impact assessment stage. In Chapter 6.2.6 (“Surroundings”), which specifically considers ecosystem services like shade, access to sunlight, and amenity, the assessment focuses predominantly on visual impacts and concludes that these are “low and acceptable.” While the section explicitly references the Community Garden and Nursery, there is no substantive assessment of reduced solar access, nor any quantification or evaluation of how overshadowing may affect the *functionality* or *productivity* of the community asset.

As the impact is identified through consultation and baseline analysis, yet is not assessed in the corresponding impact chapter, the EIS is incomplete. Solar access is a critical component of ecosystem services, particularly for community gardens and nurseries, where sunlight availability directly underpins plant health. It is also a key contributor to the ecological function of adjoining bushland. The omission of any detailed assessment or proposed mitigation measures demonstrates that the EIS does not adequately provide for the avoidance, minimisation, or management of this effect. **The LCBCS seeks a detailed assessment of solar access impacts to the Community Garden, Nursery, and adjacent bushland to be prepared and exhibited.**

Tree Protection Zones

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment states that tree removal is largely necessitated by encroachment into Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) associated with the proposed building footprint. However, it is also acknowledged that trees on the site have not been accurately surveyed. TPZs enable the accurate assessment of potential impacts to retained trees and define appropriate protection measures during construction. This limitation significantly undermines the reliability of the TPZ calculations presented. The extent of encroachment,



and therefore the level of risk, may be understated. If retained trees are subject to unanticipated root or canopy damage due to inaccurate TPZ delineation, there is a high likelihood of decline and eventual removal.

This uncertainty has implications beyond individual tree outcomes. Urban tree canopy plays a critical role in supporting biodiversity, maintaining habitat connectivity, and delivering ecosystem services such as urban cooling. **The LCBCS requests that trees on the development site are accurately surveyed to ensure that TPZ calculations are as precise as possible and can be relied upon to protect urban bushland within and adjacent to the proposed building footprint.**

Resource Consumption and Hazards

The proposed data centre would place heavy demands on existing infrastructure systems, especially those supplying electricity and water. Operation of such a centre would require substantial backup power generation – in practice, diesel – to provide for failure of electricity supply during periods when the grid is heavily loaded. This in turn would require storage on-site of large reserves of diesel fuel, a potential fire and environmental hazard. **When assessing the proposal, “stress tests” should be carried out to investigate potential impacts on electricity and water-supply networks, and potential fire and environmental risks due to fuel stored and used on site.**

Kind regards,

Shauna Forrest - President

on behalf of the Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc.