

Submission Opposing the DigiCo Data Centre Expansion – May 2025

Submitted by- Resident of Ada Place, Ultimo NSW

I strongly oppose the proposed expansion of the DigiCo Data Centre on Harris Street, Ultimo. My opposition is based primarily on the serious impact the development will have on residential amenity, particularly through increased overshadowing, as well as environmental concerns and inaccuracies in the proposal.

1. Overshadowing of Residential Properties

The existing data centre already casts significant shadow across the Ultimo Heritage Conservation Zone. The proposed expansion will further exacerbate this, particularly affecting homes in Ada Place, a street composed entirely of residences and a small park. On winter mornings, terraces in Ada Place currently do not receive sunlight until around 10:30am. Any increase in building height or bulk will further reduce access to sunlight, light, and sky.

Despite this, the Environmental Impact Statement fails to include any visual or shadow assessments from Ada Place, instead selecting viewpoints that favour the developer, such as Bulwara Road and Fig Street Park. This exclusion misrepresents the real impact on residents west of the site. A proper shadow diagram and visual impact assessment must be provided for Ada Place and other directly affected areas.

2. Environmental Impact

The expansion does not include any provisions for solar panels or renewable energy sources, despite the centre's extremely high electricity usage. Given Sydney's growing density and known energy strain during peak periods, this omission is unacceptable. Other centres, such as Equinix, have implemented rooftop solar in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Canberra. Digi Co must be held to a similar standard.

Further concerns include the potential for excessive generator noise and air emissions. While the proposal claims generator operation will remain under 200 hours per year (thus avoiding EPA licensing), it also allows for up to 30 additional hours in certain circumstances. This exceeds the threshold and raises serious concerns, particularly given past precedents during heatwaves where similar centres were required to switch to generator power.

3. Inaccuracies and Lack of Consultation

The proposal contains misleading information, such as misclassifying residential buildings as commercial. Key residential complexes, including the Goldsbrough Apartments and buildings along Jones Street, are wrongly described. Additionally, claims of community consultation are inaccurate—Ultimo Village Voice only received notice of the proposal in May 2025, with no real opportunity for public engagement. Many residents never received the stated consultation materials.

Conclusion

The proposed expansion will significantly diminish the residential amenity of the surrounding community, particularly due to overshadowing. It lacks meaningful environmental safeguards and has failed to adequately consult the community. I urge the planning authorities to address these concerns.

A Viewpoint from Ada Place would show that it is physically overshadowed by the large imposing bulk of the Digi Co Data Centre building on Harris Street that dominates the resident's skyline 24/7.

I would insist that this Viewpoint be included in the document and into the overall evaluation of the project expansion.