



FRIENDS OF ULTIMO

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To
NSW Planning Portal
<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/digico-syd1-data-centre-expansion>

To
The Hon. Kobi Shetty
balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Ultimo, 27 May, 2025

SUBMISSION DigiCo SYD1 Data Centre Expansion SSD

Friends of Ultimo (FoU) is a community action group, founded fifteen years ago to address local Ultimo issues. We communicate with our 300 members through regular emails friendsofucc@gmail.com and a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ultimofriends> (200 followers).

We would like to comment on the DigiCo SYD1 Data Centre Expansion SSD currently on public exhibition as follows -

-1- DEMOLITION/CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

Ultimo includes a heritage-protected area close to the “Global Switch”. Despite this, its community suffered significant disturbance during past construction activities (e.g. “New Life” development). Most of the disturbance could have been avoided with more considerate planning and we wish to avoid it happening again in the future.

-1.1- Work zones and site traffic (EIS - Construction Traffic Management Plan)

We note that the Applicant only requires a one-lane Work Zone along Pyrmont Street which would have only minimal detrimental effects on Ultimo residents.

We also note that the inbound/outbound site traffic will use Pyrmont Bridge Road and Pyrmont Street (inbound) and Pyrmont Street, Quarry Street and Harris Street (outbound) thus avoiding the protected area.

We would oppose work zones on Quarry Street or Harris Street (unlikely to be approved by TfNSW anyway) and site traffic within the protected area.

-1.2- Utilities connections (EIS - Utility Services Report)

a) Electricity

We note that existing 6 cables from an Ausgrid high-voltage substation in Pyrmont are deemed to be sufficient to accommodate the increased power demand (from 42.5MW to 88MW) but that one of them will require significant re-routing.

Fortunately, the route shown does not affect the protected area.

Further, **we are disappointed that the Applicant has not considered any grid-power consumption mitigation via the installation of solar panels and storage batteries.**

b) Water supply

We note that the expansion will require a new water main line running from the Bulwara Road/Fig Street junction to the site.

We trust the new line will run along Harris Street and will **avoid the protected area** (Bulwara Road).

c) Water discharge

We note that the existing sewage installation is deemed to be sufficient to accommodate the expansion requirements.

d) Internet connections

We did not find any information about any new internet connections (optical fibre cables, etc.). This omission is **NOT ACCEPTABLE** for a data centre project aiming to double its data uploading/downloading capacity.

-2- EXPANSION EFFECTS ON NEIGHBOURHOOD

Residents in the vicinity of the “Global Switch” building have a number of reservations about the proposed extension. They include –

- Noise, vibration and dust nuisances during construction.
- Visual impact, view losses and solar access reductions.
- Noise and pollution from the diesel generators.
- Increased heat (“local micro-climate”) from the cooling systems.

Friends of Ultimo support these community members’ concerns.

-3- GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON DATA CENTRES

Data Centres are experiencing a rapid expansion fuelled by AI development and data and software storage’s ever increasing needs.

They consume large amounts of electricity (5% of Australia total to-date, 8% predicted by 2030 and as much as 15% in the future).

Refer to the Financial Review of 23 May 2025

<https://www.afr.com/companies/energy/australia-s-grid-operators-eye-new-rules-for-power-hungry-data-centres-20250522-p5m1dq> .

Their relative importance **threatens the stability of the grid** (see the example of a recent incident in the USA in the article above) and **pushes the price of electricity up** for consumers at a time when the Australian electricity market is having difficulties transiting from fossil fuel to renewables.

The current situation is such that **the Australian Energy Market Operator “has requested the grid’s rules be changed to properly accommodate a surge in data centres.”**

Meanwhile **electricity rates in NSW are expected to increase by up to 9.7% in July.**

In these circumstances it would be unwise to approve a data centre extension until the rules review required by the Market Operator is completed.

For all these reasons Friends of Ultimo OPPOSES the DigiCo SYD1 Data Centre Expansion SSD.

Thank you for your attention,



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Friends of Ultimo

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