Written submission by Peter Jessup, relating to the Draft Expectations for Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers: Tasmania September 2026.

My submission is a follow up to an emailed response from Minister Felix Ellis, in relation to the issue mentioned above, as a result of my raising concerns about Optic Fibre capacity across Bass Strait.

Firstly, as a general comment about the document Draft Expectations for Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers: Tasmania September 2026, I would like to point out and stress that the language used in the document is too aspirational i.e. the use of the word "expectations", rather than mandating some items as non-negotiable in the interests of all Tasmanians, by using the word "must", or the words "must not".

I am especially submitting that there are issues likely to affect our Tasmanian way of life that must not be negotiated down, or away, in relation to energy, water and TELECOMMUNICATIONS infrastructure. This is exemplified by the limitations of Optic Fibre capacity across Bass Strait, which is critical to all forms of communication between Tasmania and the mainland, and the world beyond, including internet usage.

From the document Draft Expectations... 6. Approval pathways we have a set of considerations under the heading Existing processes may consider matters including: which lastly mentions electricity, water, telecommunications and other infrastructure requirements – I am saying that the ambivalent language used here is completely inappropriate for achieving protection of our Tasmanian way of life and normal government and business operations, without crippling the Tasmanian economy!

Those issues of electricity, water, telecommunications should be given the highest priority in all matters relating to proposals for Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers in Tasmania, so that the very earliest planning can be put in place to ensure the applicable infrastructure can be augmented, or new infrastructure can be built, to suit the relevant needs.

In the case of Optic Fibres across Bass Strait, any provision would require extensive planning, cable manufacture, use of a suitable cable laying ship, building of onshore terminals, in addition to

connections to Data Centres and the internet to provide access for users.

The provision and commissioning of a new Optic Fibre cable across Bass Strait can only be achieved after a long lead time of scoping, doing studies, achieving approvals from multiple regulatory agencies, public consultation, obtaining finance, booking a time window for a cable laying ship, before the physical work can begin.

Similarly, obtaining energy to power a Data Centre would be a long term project, requiring a lead time of years to complete, so that any power required is dispatchable to the Data Centre.

I understand that the document Draft Expectations for Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers: Tasmania September 2026 has been compiled for release to potential developers and for public consultation purposes. Consequently, it gives a summary of expectations which are attractive to developers and contains motherhood statements agreeable to public interests.

However, at some point it becomes necessary to set out definitive statements that developers must comply with, for the benefit of all Tasmanians, so that the developers know what is required from them by the Tasmanian Government and the community.

Those definitive statements must be backed by Tasmanian legislation, so that all aspects of planning and approvals are enforceable, and the relevant developers and companies are held to account for the provision and conduct of the Data Centres.

Therefore, I would submit that the Tasmanian Government must give a binding undertaking to Tasmanian constituents that commits to legislation being prepared to enable Data Centre proponents to be held to account for their provision and conduct of Data Centres, in such a way that no existing infrastructure is impacted, either in the building stages, or in the operations of Data Centres. Such legislation would then regulate the Data Centres to maintain the social licence they are claiming they have from Tasmanians.

Failure to prepare, introduce & pass legislation and then police the operations of Data Centres would be a denial of the social licence

that Tasmanians can only give with real confidence in competent government.

In practice, this would mean that Data Centre proponents could not use existing infrastucture without serious consequences to them, taking away any excuse that they may choose to use, such as the optic fibre cable provisioning company becoming insolvent, or incapable of completing its work on time, whether due to any issues beyond their control, or not.

Let me repeat that in another way. The priority at all times must be to maintain Tasmanian domestic infrastructure, including energy, water, telecommunications services, over any requirements of Data Centres, especially in crises.

I trust this submission is actively used by the Tasmanian Government as they continue to interact with the proponents of Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers.

Peter Jessup 02/10/2026

Note:

Please see the attached copy below of the email I sent to Minister Felix Ellis, referred to in the above submission, for your information.

25/08/2026 12:05 pm

**Subject: Data Centre usage of state resources**

Dear Honourable Minister Felix Ellis,

I write to you to bring to your attention the gross use of Tasmanian resources by Data Centres, including electricity, water, AND optical fibre capacity across Bass Strait.

I worked for 30 years for PMG, Telecom Australia, Telstra and NDC, the latter being a subsidiary company providing installation capacity to Telstra.

My experience and knowledge is not current, but I am aware there is only a certain capacity of optic fibre across Bass Strait, limited by the number and size of cables currently available.

If the Data Centre currently under construction in St Leonards were to be used solely by Tasmanians for storing their data and similar uses, the amount of optic fibre capacity across Bass Strait would not be a concern.

However, if there are to be multiple Data Centres constructed in Tasmania, with users not only being Tasmanian but also from the mainland and internationally, then that capacity constraint of the optic fibre currently installed across Bass Strait would require additional capacity provision, especially understanding the long lead time required to plan and implement it.

Why do I say this, you may ask?

Tasmania, unlike the mainland states, cannot as easily and quickly increase optic fibre capacity, so that existing uses of optic fibre such as telecommunications and internet are not constrained by huge data traffic to and from multiple Data Centres.

I therefore suggest, that in addition to requirements being put on Data Centre approvals to provide sufficient electricity and water for their usage, it should also be a requirement in Tasmania's case that sufficient extra optic fibre capacity be supplied to augment the current installed capacity across Bass Strait.  Otherwise, there will be severe competition for all other use of the optic fibre cables

across Bass Strait for everyday telecommunications and internet services, thus affecting government, business, education and people generally.

I further suggest that you need to obtain high quality, professionally backed, advice that determines the ACTUAL usage of a given sized Data Centre, with estimates that are NOT conservative, NOR in line with the optimism of the Data Centre proponents, so that suitable arrangements can be made, whether that involves provision by the Data Centre company, or a payment to cover such provision.

For your further information, I have seen what happens when mainland planners/engineers overlook the unique circumstances that affect Tasmania, assuming that Tasmania competes equally and effectively with the larger volume of mainland telecommunications traffic, whereas Tasmania's access was overwhelmed and effectively blocked.  Fortunately, that issue was overcome by courageous advocacy by a local engineer, with a threat of consequences to the mainlander if he did not make special provision for Tasmania's need!

Finally, please inform me of your thorough investigation of this matter and what the outcome will be for Tasmania as a whole, especially the sectional interests of everyday people.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Jessup

Here is a copy of the conclusion of Minister Ellis’s response:

I encourage you to review the Draft Statement of Expectations for Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers and to make a submission during the consultation period, which closes on 12 October 2026. The Tasmanian Government welcomes feedback from individuals with relevant knowledge and experience, and I appreciate your engagement on these important issues.