



## Data centre rush must power itself says industry, unions and environment groups

- Industry, unions, community and environment groups unite on eight responsible data centre principles put to Federal Government in joint statement
- Data centres should install own renewable energy, train new tradies, use water responsibly

### MEDIA RELEASE

**THURS 26 FEBRUARY** - Data centres setting up shop in Australia as part of the AI boom will be required to contribute to Australian energy and skills under a proposal put to the federal government by an alliance of industry groups, unions, community groups and environmental organisations today.

The plan, delivered to Industry Minister Tim Ayres and Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy Andrew Charlton by the Carbon Zero Initiative, would see data centre operators invest in new renewable energy to power their operations instead of pushing up the price of wholesale power, use water responsibly and train local apprentices rather than siphoning skills away from national priorities like housing.

The plan has been endorsed by the Clean Energy Council, Electrical Trades Union, Australian Conservation Foundation, WWF-Australia, Smart Energy Council, RE-Alliance, Climate Energy Finance, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Environment Victoria, Queensland Conservation Council, Sunrise Project Australia and Carbon Zero Initiative. The eight principles include:

1. Be powered by 100% additional renewable energy
2. Strengthen grid stability
3. Be appropriately sites to minimise impacts on nature and land use
4. Minimise embodied emissions and maximise efficiency and circularity
5. Use water resources responsibly
6. Operate with transparency
7. Commit to earning and delivering ongoing social license
8. Support the training and upskilling of the workforce

### QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL CEO, JACKIE TRAD

“Electricity demand from Australia’s data centre growth is expected to rise from 1.35 GW today to between 5-8 GW by 2035. Without new supplies of electricity to meet this demand, this will place increased pressure on all existing generation resources,” said Jackie Trad, CEO of the Clean Energy Council.

“With the expected growth in demand it’s important Australia has a sustainable solution to meet the supply needs of new data centres.

“Data centres powered exclusively by new renewable energy can grow the existing supply pool without increasing pressure on existing residential and commercial electricity users,” she said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO ETU NATIONAL SECRETARY, MICHAEL WRIGHT**

"Australia needs tens of thousands more electrical workers to wire our nation into the 21st century - including by building data centres," Mr Wright said.

“Data centres must open doors for young Australians to train for skilled, rewarding electrical careers, not just siphon existing skills away from important national priorities like housing and energy transition.

"Data centres that invest in Australian energy and skills are welcome here - ones that drive up power prices, take drinking water and lock young people out of jobs are not," he said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO WWF-AUSTRALIA'S SENIOR MANAGER, ENERGY TRANSITION, ROB LAW**

“Data centres can play a role in Australia’s future, but only if they’re built in the right ways and right places,” said Rob Law, WWF-Australia’s Senior Manager, Energy Transition.

“That’s why we need strong guardrails to ensure new data centres are highly water-efficient and powered by 100% new build renewables.

“They must be sited smartly — away from high-value biodiversity areas and with water availability, First Nations interests and regional impacts front of mind,” he said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION CEO, ADAM BANDT**

“Data centres guzzle power and water, and big tech corporations could derail the clean energy transition unless we regulate them,” said Australian Conservation Foundation CEO Adam Bandt.

“If you want to build a data centre, you should have to build the renewables and water recycling to power it. Big tech corporations should be forced to do their fair share, so they don’t drain our resources.”

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO CLIMATE ENERGY FINANCE, DIRECTOR, TIM BUCKLEY**

“Data centre investment is red hot, so we expect our governments to ensure that giving approvals to new infrastructure projects comes with clear community benefits - after all, the data centres can only be built leveraging the existing publicly funded water and grid infrastructure we have all paid for,” Mr Buckley said.

“Approvals should be conditional upon new long-term firming renewables PPA as a pre-requisite.

“Approvals should come with clear community alignment and best practice, including developing a green energy powered future made in Australia,” he said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO CARBON ZERO INITIATIVE, PROJECT LEAD, ALEXANDER HOYSTED**

“Data centres can support Australia’s clean energy future, but only if new demand brings new renewables with it,” Mr Hoysted said.

“Clear guardrails now will benefit households, communities and the grid. Done right, data centres can accelerate Australia’s clean energy transition by anchoring new renewable generation and storage.

"We need to ensure growth strengthens the grid and expands supply, rather than competing with households and industry for limited capacity," he said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW, CEO, JACQUI MUMFORD**

"We cannot allow data centres to drain renewable energy supplies, suck up precious water resources, or degrade high biodiversity land," Ms Mumford said.

"The NSW government needs a plan to manage data centre growth and keep the renewable energy transition on track," she said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO ENVIRONMENT VICTORIA, CLIMATE CAMPAIGN MANAGER, JOY TOOSE**

"A \$10 billion data centre has been proposed for the former Hazelwood power station site in Gippsland's Latrobe Valley – a region already grappling with the water legacy of coal," Ms Toose said.

"Gippsland's waterways are already under intense pressure. Without careful planning and regulation, data centres threaten to add new and unacceptable water and energy demands onto already stressed systems - at the expense of regional communities and ecosystems," she said.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO QUEENSLAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL, ACTING DIRECTOR ANTHONY GOUGH**

"We need to make sure that new energy demands come with their own well-planned renewable energy and water supply arrangements to be able to protect our communities and unique natural environments," Mr Gough said.

"Despite the Queensland Government rhetoric of being open for business, they have stifled renewable energy investment. This needs to change if Queensland is able to participate sustainably in new data centre development."

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO SMART ENERGY COUNCIL, CHIEF ADVOCACY OFFICER, DAVID MCELREA**

"Data centres are arriving in Australia at a critical time in our energy transition, with unreliable coal and expensive gas being squeezed out of the system" Mr. McElrea said.

"We don't want data centres driving up the cost of living and causing increased climate pollution by keeping coal and gas operating a day longer than they need to."

ENDS

**Media contacts on next page**

**Media Contacts:**

<p><b>Clean Energy Council</b> Danielle Tricarico <a href="mailto:dtricarico@cleanenergycouncil.org.au">dtricarico@cleanenergycouncil.org.au</a> 0403 688 980</p>	<p><b>Electrical Trades Union</b> Lachlan Williams <a href="mailto:lachlan@theshapeagency.com.au">lachlan@theshapeagency.com.au</a> 0447 682 027</p>	<p><b>WWF-Australia</b> Paul Fahy <a href="mailto:pfahy@wwf.org.au">pfahy@wwf.org.au</a> 0455 528 161</p>	<p><b>Australian Conservation Foundation</b> Josh Meadows <a href="mailto:josh.meadows@acf.org.au">josh.meadows@acf.org.au</a> 0439 342 992</p>
<p><b>Climate Energy Finance</b> Tim Buckley <a href="mailto:tim@climateenergyfinance.org">tim@climateenergyfinance.org</a> 0408 102 127</p>	<p><b>Carbon Zero Initiative</b> Alexander Hoysted <a href="mailto:alexander@carbonzero.org.au">alexander@carbonzero.org.au</a> 0448 601 557</p>	<p><b>Environment Victoria</b> Joy Toose <a href="mailto:j.toose@environmentvictoria.org.au">j.toose@environmentvictoria.org.au</a> 0490 762 045</p>	<p><b>Nature Conservation Council NSW</b> Jacqui Mumford <a href="mailto:jmumford@nature.org.au">jmumford@nature.org.au</a> 0411 075 875</p>
<p><b>Queensland Conservation Council</b> Clare Silcock <a href="mailto:clare.silcock@qldconservation.org.au">clare.silcock@qldconservation.org.au</a> 0481 055 531</p>	<p><b>RE-Alliance</b> Kitty Walker <a href="mailto:kitty@re-alliance.org.au">kitty@re-alliance.org.au</a> 0438 900 117</p>	<p><b>Smart Energy Council</b> Tim Lamacraft <a href="mailto:tim@smartenergy.org.au">tim@smartenergy.org.au</a> 0448 972 192</p>	<p><b>The Sunrise Project Australia</b> Rayna <a href="mailto:rayna@impactgroupinternational.com">rayna@impactgroupinternational.com</a> 0434 664 589</p>