



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development

In relation to: Planning and Sustainable Development and ACT data centres - energy consumption

Hearing: 24 July 2026

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 112-114

Transcript provided: 28/07/2026

Answer Due: 04/08/2026

Mr Sam Engele took on notice the following question(s):

Mr Cilliers: There are 16 data centres currently in the ACT.

MS CLAY: Yes.

Mr Cilliers: And then there is currently a proposal for a new data centre that I am aware of. And a couple of other ones that we are in discussions with.

MS CLAY: Yes. Great. So about 16 now and a couple in the pipeline?

Mr Cilliers: Yes.

MS CLAY: Yes, excellent. Can you tell me how big those are? What are usage— energy use for that? Where do I get that information?

Mr Cilliers: I cannot tell you that. I have to take that on notice. It will be site specific and depending on the megawatt requirements of the actual—

MS CLAY: On notice would be fine.

Mr Cilliers: Okay.

Mr Peffer: We might just have to check if we can get that information, in terms of actual consumption of energy.

Mr Engele: Yes. Some of them sort of incorporate solar panels and batteries into their design. And that is sort part of their market appeal, is to be renewable. Other ones are generally the low—so there is two types of models of data centre, I guess, that record. There is a sort of higher energy use one, but a lower water one, and then sort of viceversa. Whether they use reverse cycle air conditioning or evaporative cooling. So largely in the ACT they are focused on those sorts of water efficient ones with higher energy uses.

MS CLAY: Can you take on notice and give me the information you can. I imagine if there are more data centres on the way, government must have some information about what we have and what the energy usage is like.

Mr Engele: Yes, we can take on notice to see what we have got. That is probably held more by Evoenergy in terms of the current connections. But we can see what we have got in terms of the planning approvals.

MS CLAY: I am happy for you to take it on notice and whoever brings it back, I do not mind.

Mr Engele: Sure.

MS CLAY: Yes, that is not a problem.

Mr Cilliers: There may be some information in terms of the environmental approval that has been given.

Mr Engele: Yes.

MS CLAY: That would be great.

Mr Engele: It may well be the connections, the size of the connection, rather than the actual energy usage. But we will see what we can get for you.

MS CLAY: We will see what we get back. I would imagine government, for something like data centre, does need to do some energy and water planning. Because they are quite big consumers, right?

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

There is currently policy work underway by the Commonwealth Government which will address some matters regarding water usage and energy efficiencies for large-scale data centres. The ACT Government will ensure that the ACT legislative requirements are consistent with the Commonwealth's framework.

Over the past six years, three development applications (DAs) have been lodged for different larger-scale data centres which were proposed within the industrial areas of Hume and Beard. These DAs were assessed by the independent Territory Planning Authority (the Authority) against the requirements of the Territory Plan and *Planning Act 2023*. Amongst other things, the Territory Plan requires the site to be appropriately serviced in terms of infrastructure and utility services. In doing so, the Authority refers the application to the relevant utilities for advice regarding the capacity of

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the network and whether any utility infrastructure or upgrades are required. This may include things such as new substations and upgrades to utility connections or the mains supply.

Data centres also may include renewable energy as part of the proposal, such as solar panels, and will also usually propose backup generators for when the electricity network is unavailable. The proposals within the ACT vary in electricity and water usage and are dependent on their scope, innovation and operation requirements. As such, the Authority is not in a position to provide data on average usage for these types of facilities.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026-2027

Signature:



Date:

6/8/26

By the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development, Chris Steel MLA