



## COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHEET

# Noise

*Why data centres make continuous noise — and how it is controlled*

### What's the concern?

Data centres run 24 hours a day, so their noise is constant. The main sources are the cooling equipment — chillers, fans and cooling towers — plus occasional generator testing. Some of this noise is low-frequency, which travels further, passes through walls more easily, and can be more noticeable at night.

### The facts

Noise is regulated under Tasmania's environmental law and the *Environment Protection Policy (Noise) 2009*. Permit conditions usually set noise limits at the nearest homes for day, evening and night — the night limit being strictest. The overall "dB(A)" number alone can understate low-frequency noise, so a good assessment looks specifically at low-frequency content and tonality (hums).

### What good practice looks like

- A noise assessment covering continuous operation at the nearest homes for day, evening and night.
- Specific assessment of low-frequency noise and tonality — not just the overall dB(A) level.
- All plant assessed running together on a hot day, plus generator testing.
- Quieter equipment, acoustic enclosures, silencers and barriers, with plant oriented away from homes.
- Non-emergency generator testing restricted to daytime hours, with checks after opening and a complaints process.

### Questions you can ask

- What are the predicted night-time noise levels at the nearest homes?
- Does the assessment specifically address low-frequency noise and tonality?
- When can generators be tested, and what happens if limits are exceeded?

**Want to know more?** The EPA Tasmania and your local council publish further information on environmental noise. This sheet is general information, not medical, legal or planning advice; figures are indicative and a specific proposal is confirmed by qualified assessment.