



**Digital Infrastructure**  
INSTITUTE

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

# Tasmanian AI Infrastructure Governance Framework

*Governing the sustainable, secure and beneficial development of data centre and AI compute infrastructure in Tasmania*

---

**The institutional architecture that sits above the planning, public-benefit and assurance toolkit**

Prepared by: Digital Infrastructure Institute

Audience: State Government, councils, regulators, networks, industry and communities

Version 1.0 · June 2026

# About this framework

---

**This is a governance framework, not a statutory instrument.** It sets out the principles, institutional architecture, decision process, roles and assurance arrangements through which Tasmania can govern the development and operation of data centre and AI compute infrastructure. It builds on, and is given practical effect by, an established toolkit — the planning and assessment guide, the AI Public Benefit Agreement, the planning and sustainability tool, and the community materials — and it complements the strategy paper that frames the opportunity. Where this framework and any law differ, the law prevails.

## What this framework adds

A clear governance architecture — who decides what, and how the parts connect.

A staged decision process (a stage-gate model) from strategic alignment to decommissioning.

Defined roles and accountabilities across State, councils, regulators, networks, the Trust and proponents.

Arrangements for public benefit, data sovereignty and security, risk, assurance and transparent reporting.



# Executive summary

---

**Why governance matters.** Data centre and AI infrastructure is being built at speed and scale. Good projects deliver investment, clean energy demand, skills and digital capability; poorly governed growth risks higher energy prices, strained water, community conflict and stranded assets. The difference is governance — a clear, consistent system for making and assuring decisions in the public interest.

**What this framework does.** It defines nine governance principles; a five-tier governance architecture connecting national policy, State coordination, regulators and enabling bodies, the project, and community and assurance; a six-gate decision lifecycle; and clear roles, public-benefit governance, data-sovereignty and security arrangements, risk and assurance, and transparent reporting.

**How it is delivered.** Through existing instruments — State and council policy, permit conditions, Part 5 (LUPAA) agreements, a public-benefit trust deed, and the assessment toolkit — so it can be adopted incrementally without new legislation, while remaining ready to be strengthened over time.

**The ask.** Adopt the framework as the shared governance reference for the sector in Tasmania; stand up the coordinating and benefit-governance bodies; embed the stage-gate process; and report publicly against it.

## 1. Purpose, scope and application

---

### 1.1 Purpose

To ensure that data centre and AI compute infrastructure in Tasmania is developed and operated in a way that is sustainable, secure, aligned with national policy, and demonstrably beneficial to Tasmanians — with decisions that are consistent, transparent and accountable.

### 1.2 Scope

The framework applies to new and expanded data centres, co-location facilities, hyperscale campuses and large-scale AI compute centres (“AI factories”). Consistent with national expectations, it is not intended for small-scale edge or on-site enterprise facilities, which are managed through ordinary processes.

### 1.3 Application by scale

Governance should be proportionate. The framework recommends tiering obligations by facility size (for example small / medium / large by IT load in megawatts), with the most intensive coordination, public-benefit and assurance arrangements reserved for the largest facilities.

## 2. Governance principles

---

Principle	What it means
Proportionate	Oversight, obligations and benefits scale with the size and impact of the facility.
Transparent & accountable	Decisions, commitments and outcomes are documented, independently assured and publicly reported.
Additional	Benefits and clean energy are over and above statutory duties and normal commercial supply; not double-counted against national obligations.

Enduring	Commitments run for the operational life of the facility, with scheduled review.
Prudent & precautionary	Design to recognised standards; for emerging concerns (e.g. electromagnetic fields) adopt prudent-avoidance targets well inside regulatory limits.
Sovereign & secure	Protect data sovereignty, privacy, cyber-security and the security of critical infrastructure.
Locally beneficial & inclusive	Prioritise local capability, skills, research and under-served communities, including First Nations peoples.
Evidence-based	Use consistent metrics, modelling and independent verification to inform decisions.
Coordinated	Align State, local, regulatory, network and Commonwealth processes to avoid duplication and gaps.

### 3. Governance architecture

Governance is organised in five connected tiers. National policy sets direction; the State coordinates strategy and public benefit; regulators and enabling bodies approve and service; the project is assessed and bound; and community and independent assurance hold the system accountable.

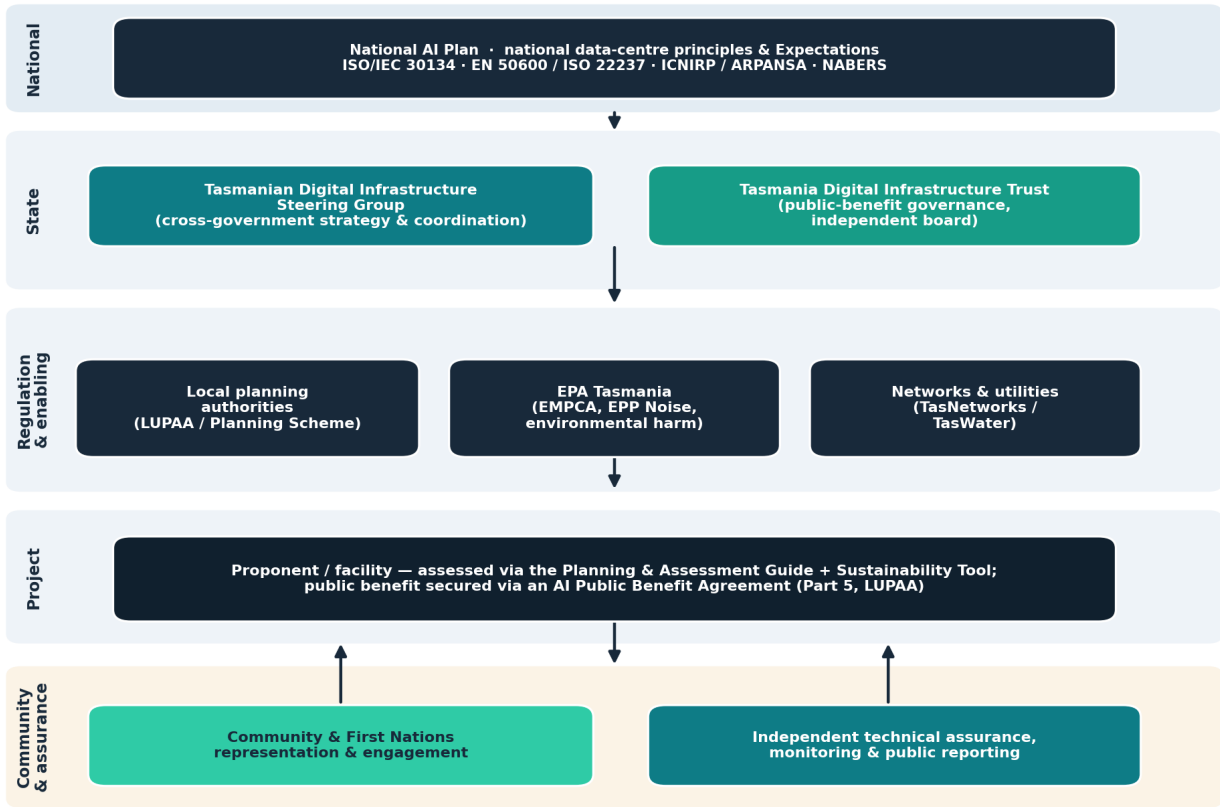


Figure 1. Tasmanian AI infrastructure governance architecture — five connected tiers from national alignment to community and assurance.

#### 3.1 The bodies and their mandates

- **National alignment** — a national strategy and standards layer the framework aligns to.
- **State** — a cross-government steering group setting strategic direction, scale thresholds and design targets, coordinating approvals, and engaging the Commonwealth; and an independent Tasmania Digital Infrastructure Trust governing public benefit.
- **Regulation & enabling** — local planning authorities (LUPAA / Tasmanian Planning Scheme), the EPA (EMPCA, noise, environmental harm), and networks and utilities (TasNetworks, TasWater) confirming capacity and servicing.
- **Project** — the proponent and facility, assessed against the guide and modelled with the tool, and bound by permit conditions and an AI Public Benefit Agreement.
- **Community & assurance** — community and First Nations representation and engagement, and independent technical assurance, monitoring and public reporting.

## 4. The governance lifecycle — a stage-gate model

Each proposal passes through six gates. A gate is a decision point at which defined evidence must be in place before the proposal proceeds; the toolkit supplies the evidence at each gate.

Gate	Stage	Key decision & evidence
G0	Strategic alignment	Does the proposal fit Tasmania's strategy, energy plan and scale thresholds? Early engagement with the steering group and networks.
G1	Pre-lodgement	Scope, siting and design tested with the sustainability tool; EPA Level 1/2 and referral triggers identified; community-engagement plan.
G2	Assessment & determination	Full assessment against the guide (energy, water, noise, heat, EMF, hazards, resilience, sustainability); notification; conditions drafted.
G3	Benefit agreement & consent	AI Public Benefit Agreement settled and secured (Part 5 / security); permit issued with conditions; instruments registered.
G4	Construction	Construction environmental management; baseline EMF, noise and water surveys; compliance verification.
G5	Operation	Monitoring against conditions and targets (PUE/WUE/CUE/REF/ERF, NABERS, noise, EMF, water); public reporting; benefit delivery.
G6	Review & decommission	Scheduled review of commitments; technology refresh; end-of-life decommissioning and rehabilitation.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

The matrix shows, for each function, who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted or Informed. It is indicative and should be confirmed in adopting policy.

Function	State	Council	EPA / reg.	Networks	Trust / assur.	Proponent
Strategy & coordination	A	C	C	C	I	I
Planning approval	I	A	C	C	I	R
Environmental approval	I	C	A	C	I	R
Energy / grid & affordability	A	I	C	R	I	R
Water servicing & disposal	C	C	A	R	I	R
Public benefit (AIPBA)	C	A	I	I	R	R
Community & First Nations engagement	C	A	I	I	C	R
Data sovereignty & security	A	I	C	C	C	R
Monitoring & assurance	C	C	C	C	A/R	R

R Responsible (does the work) A Accountable (owns the outcome) C Consulted I Informed

## 6. Public-benefit governance

Public benefit is governed independently of the consent decision to keep it credible and free of perceived favour. The recommended vehicle is the Tasmania Digital Infrastructure Trust, governed by an independent board with government, university, industry, First Nations and community representation.

- Receives and allocates benefit (compute, credits, skills, research, civic and emergency capability) across published, need-based criteria.
- Prioritises under-served and regional communities and applies Indigenous Data Sovereignty to First Nations data.
- Reports publicly each year on contributions received and benefit delivered against commitment.

Benefit is secured through an AI Public Benefit Agreement tied to the permit (a Part 5 agreement under LUPAA), backed by financial security — so it is enforceable, additional and not double-counted against national obligations.

## 7. Data sovereignty, security and responsible AI

- **Sovereignty** — government and community data subject to appropriate residency requirements; sovereign hosting options (e.g. complementing GovAI-style services) for public workloads.

- **Security & privacy** — compliance with privacy law and recognised information-security standards (e.g. ISO/IEC 27001); protection of critical-infrastructure and cyber resilience consistent with national security obligations.
- **Indigenous Data Sovereignty** — First Nations data governed under Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles and the Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data.
- **Responsible AI** — alignment with the National AI Plan's “keep Australians safe” goal and responsible-AI practices where public-benefit compute supports AI use.

## 8. Risk and assurance

The framework treats risk across consistent domains and assures them independently rather than relying on self-report.

Risk domain	Oversight & assurance
Energy & grid / affordability	Network confirmation; additionality of clean energy; demand-flexibility; independent review of cost allocation.
Water & cooling disposal	EPA / TasWater controls; monitoring of quality and volume; drought resilience.
Noise (incl. low-frequency)	EPP (Noise) compliance; commissioning and post-occupancy verification.
Heat, EMF & public health	Modelling at ultimate load; prudent-avoidance targets; baseline and post-commissioning surveys; public reporting.
Social licence	Transparent engagement; published benefit outcomes; complaints handling.
Security & data sovereignty	Independent security assurance; residency and access controls.
Deliverability & viability	Financial security; step-in and substitution; proportionate, reviewed commitments.

The **sustainability tool** supports this by turning design inputs into the metrics, compliance checks and a risk matrix used at each gate; independent assurance verifies the results.

## 9. Transparency, monitoring and reporting

- A public register of facilities, commitments and conditions.
- Annual public reporting against agreed indicators — investment and jobs; PUE, WUE, CUE, REF, ERF and NABERS; water use; noise and EMF survey results; and public-benefit delivered.
- Independent verification of reported performance, with remedies where targets are missed.

## 10. Alignment with national and international frameworks

The framework is designed to nest within, and help deliver, broader policy and standards: the National AI Plan and the national data centre principles and Expectations; the ISO/IEC 30134 metric family and EN 50600 / ISO/IEC 22237 facility standards; ASHRAE thermal guidance and NABERS; and ICNIRP / ARPANSA limits for

electromagnetic fields. Aligning locally with these makes Tasmanian proposals stronger candidates for streamlined Commonwealth pathways.

## 11. Instruments — giving the framework effect

Instrument	Role
State policy / strategy	Sets direction, scale thresholds and design targets; establishes the steering group and Trust.
Council planning policy	Embeds the assessment guide and stage-gate process in local processes.
Permit conditions	Bind environmental, amenity, energy, water, noise and EMF requirements to the consent.
Part 5 agreement (LUPAA)	Secures the AI Public Benefit Agreement and ongoing obligations, registered on title.
Trust deed	Establishes and governs the public-benefit Trust.
Memoranda of understanding	Coordinate State, council, network and Commonwealth roles.
The toolkit	Guide, tool, AIPBA and community materials supply the evidence and the consistent standard.

## 12. Implementation and maturity

1. Adopt the framework and principles as the shared governance reference (State and councils).
2. Stand up the cross-government steering group and establish the Tasmania Digital Infrastructure Trust.
3. Embed the stage-gate process and the toolkit in pre-lodgement and assessment; build assessor capability.
4. Set scale thresholds, design targets and reporting indicators with independent advice.
5. Pilot the full process on a suitable proposal; publish the first annual report.
6. Review and mature the framework on a fixed cycle, strengthening instruments as the sector grows.

## Appendix A — Governance bodies at a glance

Body	Mandate	Independence
Digital Infrastructure Steering Group	Cross-government strategy, thresholds, coordination, Commonwealth liaison.	Government-led
Tasmania Digital Infrastructure Trust	Receive, allocate and report public benefit.	Independent board
Local planning authorities	Assess and determine applications; secure local benefit; engage community.	Statutory
EPA Tasmania	Environmental assessment and regulation under EMPCA.	Statutory / independent
Networks & utilities	Confirm capacity; allocate costs; protect affordability and servicing.	Regulated entities
Independent assurance adviser	Verify modelling, monitoring and reported performance.	Independent
Community & First Nations representation	Voice community interests; govern First Nations data.	Community

## Appendix B — Relationship to the toolkit

Framework element	Delivered by
Consistent assessment standard	Data Centre Planning & Assessment Guide (Tasmania)
Evidence at each gate	Planning & Sustainability Tool (metrics, compliance, risk)
Public-benefit capture	AI Public Benefit Agreement (proposal, model clauses, deck)
Social licence & engagement	Community materials (incl. EMF explainer)
Strategic context	Tasmania & the Data Centre Opportunity — strategy paper

**Note on status and advice:** this framework is a strategic and interpretive aid, not a statutory instrument or legal, financial or planning advice. Bodies, thresholds and instruments should be established with qualified advice and consistent with the law in force. The position reflects June 2026.