Citizens of Tottenham – Data Centre Remediation

About Us

Citizens of Tottenham represents the interests of those in the Tottenham, West Footscray and Kingsville area. We have formed as our quality of life has significantly deteriorated, especially since the expansion of NextDC M3 commenced. Our ultimate goal is to make our area a better place to live with more services, amenities and green space.

About the Area

We live in a residential community in West Footscray and Kingsville, in Melbourne's inner west. The area includes Kingsville Kindergarten, Corpus Christi Primary School, the Roberts Street Maternal and Child Health clinic, and Stony Creek, which runs along the southern boundary of the NextDC M3 site. Within 500 metres of the combined NextDC M3 and Perri Melbourne Data Centre footprint there are approximately 763 homes and around 2,600 residents, including young families, elderly residents, and people with existing respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Many residents have lived here for years; others have only recently purchased homes in the area.

Data Centre Impact

Many members of our community have been severely negatively impacted by the construction and operation of NextDC's M3 data centre. The expansion of NextDC M3 and the construction of the Perri Melbourne Data Centre (PMDC) will have an unacceptable cumulative impact on many residents in the community. Impacts include:

- Increased diesel emissions from the operation of diesel generators (approximately 132) at the data centres
- Increased heat and humidity
- Incessant light and noise pollution
- Loss of amenity and presence of imposing, highly secure buildings with high fences and constantly patrolling security guards
- Dangerous streets caused by illegal parking and aggressive driving by contractors
- Risk of catastrophic lithium and diesel fuel fire

The result is that the area is no longer safe for many residents and the loss of amenity is permanent. Families with small children and people with complex health needs are especially impacted by the construction and operation of these data centres.

Remediation

The approval, construction and operation of two large-scale data centres in the area necessitates considerable remediation at a scale commensurate with the financial resources of the companies responsible and the severity and permanence of the impact on residents.

As the data centres are the ‘agents of change’ in an established residential community, it is incumbent on them to recognise the impact of their activities.

Residents must not bear the costs and burdens imposed on them by the construction and operation of these data centres.

It must be clearly stated – many in the community are strongly opposed to the presence of these data centres and strongly believe they should never been approved in this location. They feel that their interests and wellbeing have been ignored in favour of inappropriate industrial development that does not benefit them or their community.

These residents are expected to bear the ongoing impacts on their lives for the common good and economic growth of the country and the state.

The below are the minimum we expect to help re-build the loss of trust many feel towards developers and operators of data centres and genuine distress that has been caused.

Relocation Assistance

These acknowledge that a number of residents would leave the area if possible, but may not be able to due to their financial situation. This is especially true for families who may have recently purchased in the area, who now face the possibility of exposing their children to harmful levels of pollution due to the use of diesel generators, dangerous streets and a much degraded local environment. They must not be forced to bear a financial loss due to the residential area they bought into being turned into a data centre precinct.

1. Voluntary buybacks offered to all residents within at least 500 metres of either facility.
    a. Home value to be based on latest Maribyrnong City Council rates notice or independent market valuation, whichever is higher.
    b. Equivalent stamp duty and fees to be paid for the purchase of a comparable property
    c. Moving costs that include packing, unpacking and up to 3 months storage (if required)
    d. A one-off payment of $10,000 per household to assist with time off from employment and general inconvenience.
2. Renters relocation assistance to cover moving costs, time off from employment and general inconvenience.

Amenity

3. Amenity-loss compensation due to intensive, ongoing construction activities. This is to be paid per year per household for the duration of construction activities. The rate should be $5,000 per household per year at the boundary of either data centre, reducing by $500 for every 100 metres distance from either data centre. This is to be retrospective to the commencement of NextDC M3 Stage 3 construction, acknowledging the loss already suffered by many community members.

4. Compensation to residents that experience utilities outages, especially electricity, due to augmentation works for infrastructure to support data centre development. This it to be set at $100 per hour per affected household.

Local Infrastructure

5. Creation of a community battery or Virtual Power Plant (VPP) serving the residential properties within at least 500 metres of the combined facility footprint.

Local Parks and Green Space

6. Purchase 5 Cala St, West Footscray and put it to community use. Exact use and terms to be determined with community input.

Community Benefit Scheme

7. Require NEXTDC and Perri Projects to jointly establish a Community Benefit Fund, through a Section 173 Agreement, for the benefit of all residents within the overlap zone not captured by the instruments above. The fund must include as minimum components: acoustic treatment — double glazing, insulation, and sealing — for rental properties within the overlap zone where the tenant requests it, with priority given to elderly residents and households with members with existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions; real-time air quality monitoring stations at multiple locations within the overlap zone, with results published on a publicly accessible register maintained independently of the proponents; a contribution to the restoration of the Stony Creek corridor consistent with the Maribyrnong City Council Stony Creek Rehabilitation Plan 2019–2029; and a contribution to community infrastructure within the overlap zone. All notifications, reports, and community communications associated with these permit conditions must be available in the primary languages of the West Footscray and Kingsville community, including Vietnamese, Cantonese, Somali, and Arabic, as identified through consultation with Maribyrnong City Council

Construction

8. The construction of large-scale, intensive industrial infrastructure in a residential area has and will continue considerable loss of amenity and stress for residents. To reduce this, weekend work (including Saturdays) and work on public holidays is not to be carried out. Under no circumstances will out-of-hours work be carried out.

9. Noise and emissions from diesel machinery, especially cranes, is an ongoing physical and psychological stress for residents. To reduce this, battery-electric or hybrid construction machinery must be used wherever such machinery is available and technically capable of performing the required work.

10. Some streets have been repeatedly dug up, causing noise and disruption residents. Each excavation event causes disruption to traffic, pedestrian access, noise, dust, and amenity for surrounding residents over an extended period. The cumulative impact of repeated and uncoordinated utility excavations is a specific and documented source of community harm that is entirely avoidable with adequate planning. A consolidated utility connection plan must be developed and published prior to the commencement of any further excavation works under the approved expansion. The plan must coordinate all power, data, water and communications connections for the full scope of the approved expansion, with the objective of minimising the number of separate street excavation events to the greatest extent practicable. The plan must be shared with residents.

Diesel Generator Usage Disclosure

11. Make publicly available the schedule, duration and number of generators tested under what conditions (such as no-load, full-load etc) in an easily accessible and understandable document. Technical information must also be provided, possibly as an appendices

12. Residents to be notified no less than 30 minutes prior to commencement via text message that diesel generator testing will carried out.