

APPENDIX

Data centre policy across Australia: jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Policy instrument and status	Land use and siting	Energy and grid	Water	Approvals and community benefit
Victoria	Sustainable Data Centre Action Plan (22 Sept 2026). Planning and policy framework; not legislation. Four enablers; builds on existing frameworks via a new planning category and referral controls.	A land use definition for data centres that Victorian planning schemes will include. Locational controls to prohibit in residential zones + 150m buffer. Locational controls to prohibit in rural zones unless serviced by critical infrastructure.	“Bring your own supply”: offset operational electricity with new renewables + storage. Proponent pays connection and augmentation; demand flexibility; PUE targets.	Recycled/non-drinking water for intensive cooling. dWUE ≤1.0 (potable)/≤1.6 (non-potable) to ISO/IEC 30134-9. Full cost of water infrastructure.	Investment Front Door + Coordinator-General; expanded referrals. Local Investment Guarantee (jobs, skills, First Nations, procurement).
New South Wales	Data Centre Guidelines + 3-pillar Policy Framework (17 Aug 2026). Guidance, not legislation; LC inquiry due 3 Nov 2026.	Site-selection guidance favouring brownfield near existing capacity and Renewable Energy Zones. No fixed buffer.	Six principles, 17 performance measures. 10-year PPAs with new (pre-FID) generation; ability to cut grid demand on request. Large loads to fund network infrastructure (EII Act amendments).	Forecast max/average water demand (commercial-in-confidence). IPART review of full cost recovery for water.	75-day assessment commitment for compliant projects. Investment Delivery Authority fast-tracks major projects.
South Australia	Data Centre Strategy + proposed Data Centre and AI Infrastructure Act (not yet tabled). Essential-infrastructure planning pathway.	Essential-infrastructure pathway; faster approvals tied to projects with their own firmed renewable supply.	“New energy for new demand”: match growth with new firmed supply. No adverse impact on power bills; fair network cost allocation.	Legislation to secure sustainable, responsible water use as a condition of support.	Streamlined development conditioned on coordination. Commitment to local jobs, skills and workforce.
Tasmania	Draft Statement of Expectations (7 Sept 2026); comment closed 12 Oct 2026. Non-statutory; creates no new approval step.	July 2025 “AI Factory Zone” has no planning instrument giving it legal effect; applications go to councils.	Developers asked to bring new renewable generation into the state and cover network/connection costs.	Submissions urge full water-balance disclosure and annual public reporting of actual use, PUE and WUE.	No dedicated fast-track; ordinary planning applies. Investment-led (e.g. subsea-cable projects).
Queensland	No dedicated plan. Investment via Advance Queensland and digital-economy	Major projects proceed under general planning.	No standalone renewable-offset rule; not part of the July	No dedicated water instrument; general planning.	General assessment, no bespoke fast-track.

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	roadmaps; state approach under development.		2026 energy-ministers' additionality agreement.		Social impact assessment and council agreements being developed.
Western Australia	No dedicated plan (emerging). Government digital strategy; industry pushing for a dedicated plan.	No defined land use for a data centre in planning schemes; interest in Mid West and North West.	Covered by general digital strategy; subsea-cable focus.	No dedicated water instrument.	General planning; no bespoke pathway.
Northern Territory	No dedicated plan (investment-led). Digital Territory strategy and Terabit Territory network; Darwin as Asia gateway.	Driven by strategic location rather than codified siting controls.	Not part of the July 2026 renewable-additionality agreement.	No dedicated water instrument.	General processes; no bespoke pathway.
ACT	Data Centre Framework announced 26 Aug 2026; draft due early 2027. Builds on National Cabinet standards.	Limited to locations already permitted under ACT planning; no residential neighbourhoods. Commercial, industrial, transport/services and certain non-urban zones.	Supports offsetting additional demand through new renewable generation; proposals to show how they strengthen the grid.	Best-practice water efficiency expected; water security a protected interest.	No faster pathway attached (yet). Framework to support local jobs, innovation and amenity.
Commonwealth (context)	Expectations (Mar 2026); mandatory national standards to be legislated early 2027. Standards to complement, not duplicate, state processes.	Standards to address location; size threshold (likely energy-based) under consultation.	Rules to require offsetting demand with new in-jurisdiction generation; states may go further.	Standards to set requirements on minimising water use.	No net cost to consumers/communities; community engagement and skills.

Sources: Victorian Sustainable Data Centre Action Plan (2026); NSW Data Centre Guidelines and Policy Framework (2026); South Australia Data Centre Strategy (2026); Tasmania draft Statement of Expectations (2026); ACT Data Centre Framework announcement (2026); Australian Government Expectations of Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers (2026) and National Cabinet communiqué (August 2026).