

Public Submission: Project Ares Referral (Energy North Pty Ltd)

To: Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NTEPA)

Submitted by: Territory Resident / Community Stakeholder

Date: 14 August 2026

Subject: Requirement for Real-World Human Impact & Community Feedback Evidence

Core Position: Before approving massive developments like Project Ares, the NTEPA must require independent research gathering direct feedback from residents living near existing hyperscale data centres globally. If evidence shows these developments harm quality of life, noise levels, or resource access, the project must be fundamentally reconsidered.

1. Grounding Environmental Impact in Lived Human Experience

Technical modeling and theoretical projections are insufficient to assess the true impact of a 1GW hyperscale facility. Environmental assessment must be informed by real-world human outcomes:

- **Mandatory Feedback Synthesis:** The NTEPA should direct the proponent to collate and present independent community feedback from residents living adjacent to operating hyperscale hubs globally (focusing on sustained low-frequency noise, groundwater impacts, and local economic disruption).
- **Re-evaluating Project Necessity:** If real-world evidence demonstrates that hyperscale facilities consistently degrade the daily lives, health, or wellbeing of surrounding residents, the NTEPA must hold the authority to reconsider whether the project should proceed.

2. Key Community Concerns for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Should the NTEPA proceed with standard Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assessment, the Terms of Reference must mandate explicit evaluation of:

- **Groundwater Security (Wiso Basin):** Independent verification that extracting up to 4 gigalitres per year of groundwater will not compromise local aquifers, pastoral reliance, or First Nations water security.
- **Acoustic and Environmental Burden:** Comprehensive testing on the cumulative impact of continuous cooling infrastructure and gas-fired generation on regional quiet and local wildlife.
- **First Nations Governance:** Direct decision-making involvement and explicit consent from Traditional Owners and custodians of the Barkly region.