

**Submission
No 25**

INQUIRY INTO DATA CENTRES

Organisation: Growing@Goulburn

Date Received: 23 March 2026



Monday, 23 March 2026

Submission: Parliamentary Inquiry – Data Centres

Growing@Goulburn (G@G) was instrumental in the formation of the Agrisolar CRC, which intends to re-submit its Bid in 2026/7. Additionally, I am also the President of Goulburn Mulwaree Landcare Landscapes Inc.

Therefore, in both capacities, I have a profound interest in renewable energy in the Goulburn Mulwaree Shire and in particular, solar energy co-located with agriculture.

It is now abundantly clear that data centres and solar parks are facing significant headwinds from affected communities who resent the installation of “new technology” that provides little or no direct benefit to them.

However, if data centres were to be placed in areas with ample power and water, given that they are both hungry for power and thirsty for cooling, some of these objections might be mitigated.

There is worldwide understanding that data centres must bring their power with them, preferably solar energy and long duration BESS. Nevertheless, they must also have access to grid power in case of emergency or prolonged adverse weather. This scenario is of considerable use in stabilising the grid by absorbing excess power in the middle of the day.

If the solar energy were to be installed alongside the data centres and batteries, underneath existing transmission lines, on farmland that continues to be used productively, this could be a major win for regional centres close to population hubs. This is the project that G@G, with the support of CRC members and the NSW Decarbonisation & Innovation Hub, intends to trial commercially.

Such a project will involve the participation of University of NSW, Sydney University, Western Sydney University and University of Melbourne along with solar developers in the Goulburn Mulwaree and Queanbeyan/Palerange Shires. Incidentally, there are seven solar parks in construction or planning within a 50 kilometre radius of Goulburn, where our first project is to be situated. That combined development will be relatively small, generating only about 5-7MW on 320 acres. Our second and far larger project is destined for Sutton Forest in the

Wingecarribee Shire and will generate 300MW and store 3,000 MWh on 1,310 acres alongside a data centre.

This submission therefore seeks definitive planning regulation for both agrisolar projects and affiliated data centres to lubricate the approval process where a project incorporates Power Use Efficiency (PUA), Water Use Efficiency (WUA), improved agricultural output, soil carbon content increase, biodiversity enhancement and community benefits. In addition, the use of environmentally friendly cooling systems that avoid harmful refrigerants and recycled water where possible, should be encouraged.

Some form of ecological certification and carbon accreditation (ACCUs or similar) would give climate friendly, agrisolar-powered data centres a good name.

I'm willing to be questioned further about this submission.

Sincerely,

Julia McKay, B.A., LL.B.
Director

Some References:

<https://agrisolarau.com/>

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