FOR COUNCILS & COMMUNITY INTEREST GROUPS

Independent · global · politically agnostic

mischief. insight & impact

Data Centres 101

Everything your council wanted to know about data centres, but was too polite to ask.

Data centre proposals are landing on council desks across Australia. This plain-English course gives non-technical leaders the panavision view, so you negotiate from knowledge rather than hope.

What we cover

01 **What data centres are**
From hyperscale to edge: how they work, who builds them and why location matters.

02 **Why communities need them**
The invisible backbone of health, banking, education, AI and your own council services.

03 **Myths and fallacies**
Separating the headlines from the evidence on jobs, water, power and noise.

04 **Sustainability**
Energy, water, heat reuse and land: the questions worth asking and the answers worth expecting.

05 **Best practice exemplars**
What the UK, Australia and the Nordics are getting right, and what translates to your patch.

06 **Social licence to operate**
Using the social licence agenda to build better developer relationships and elevated community benefit.

YOUR FACILITATOR

Dr Terri Simpkin PhD

Terri is a global speaker on digital infrastructure, with keynotes in London, Vienna, Paris, New York, Singapore and Sydney on workforce, social licence and strategy. Co-author of the Masters in Data Centre Leadership & Management and adviser to Australian governments on skills, she brings a true ecosystem view.

Continued overleaf

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Myth, meet evidence

"They're just big empty sheds."
They are critical infrastructure. Your hospital records, payroll and rates notices already live in one.

"They create no local jobs."
Construction peaks, then fewer but skilled, long-term roles follow. Who fills them depends on the pipeline you help build.

"They'll drink the town dry."
Cooling design varies enormously. Recycled water and closed-loop systems are now realistic conditions to set.

"Residents will pay for the power."
Grid impact is real, but policy is moving to make operators fund new renewables and network upgrades.

Who's doing it well

UNITED KINGDOM

North Lanarkshire AI Growth Zone

A community fund of up to £543m over 15 years, 50 apprenticeships, and hospital heat reuse under exploration.

AUSTRALIA

Victoria leads the way

A state first in recycled water cooling at Mt Cottrell, plus a 2026 action plan expecting jobs, training and community investment.

THE NORDICS

Heat that warms a city

In Espoo, Finland, data centre heat is planned to cover around 40% of district heating. Stockholm already warms homes this way.

SOCIAL LICENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

Know what's possible. Then ask for it.

The strongest community benefits come from places that knew what good looked like before the conversation started. We share what's working around the world and the latest thinking on how data centres are built and run, including:

- renewables and grid-friendly operation
- biomimicry and nature-inspired design
- edge designs and distributed compute
- heat, water and community benefit models

INDEPENDENT BY DESIGN

Sessions take a broad, global view of digital infrastructure. They are not designed to assess or promote any particular project, operator or development. The aim is to equip people and communities with better, up-to-date and politically agnostic information, so they can reach their own conclusions.

Book a session for your council or community group

Half day · In person or online · Programme fees on enquiry

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