Best Effort.

The weekday briefing on Australian telecommunications, data centres and AI infrastructure.

TODAY'S BRIEFING

Tuesday 24 November 2026

- Data centres dominate Monday 23 November 2026.
- Transparency International Australia found executives from 10 datacentre companies held 119 ministerial meetings across five jurisdictions, with related political donations nearly tripling.
- Victorian documents show energy officials warned the minister in March that up to A$25 billion of investment could cause a sudden jump in power demand.
- In Auckland, Vector Fibre's recovery from the Fanshawe Street fire enters a third day, with some dark fibre and DWDM circuits still affected.

11 stories · **22 min** reading · **18** sources · Online at besteffort.au/editions/2026-11-24

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POLICY & REGULATION 1 OF 11

Datacentre firms held 119 ministerial meetings in three years, Transparency International finds

Executives from 10 datacentre companies met premiers and ministers 119 times across five jurisdictions, and related political donations nearly tripled, according to a Transparency International Australia report released on Monday 23 November 2026.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 2 sources · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

With federal meetings undisclosed and approvals being fast-tracked in some states, the report adds pressure for more transparency around how datacentre and AI infrastructure projects are approved.

Executives from 10 major datacentre companies held 119 meetings with premiers and ministers over three years in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and the ACT, according to research by Transparency International Australia. Those are the only jurisdictions that publish ministerial diaries, and the meetings were mostly held in 2026, the Guardian reported. The group warned that the rapid growth of AI datacentres risks giving the industry undue influence through access to ministers, political donations and the revolving door between government and industry.

Donations from the major datacentre companies and their lobbying firms nearly tripled in three years, from $685,041 to $1,828,077. Eleven datacentre companies and their third-party lobbyists together paid $3.4 million over four years in federal donations and other receipts to parties and industry associations. Federal ministerial meetings and lobbyist activities are kept secret.

In NSW, datacentre companies and their lobbyists met ministers 43 times since 2024, including Treasurer Daniel Mookhey 10 times. NextDC met NSW ministers 14 times. In Victoria the tally was 28 meetings, 19 of them with former minister Danny Pearson, who hosted datacentre executives at the Australian Open in January 2026. CDC, a regular donor to the ALP, had five ministerial meetings in Victoria and two Melbourne datacentres approved. In Tasmania, Firmus had 10 meetings in 2026 before securing approval for three datacentres.

In Queensland, the report counted 30 meetings, including 10 with Premier David Crisafulli. The Guardian reported the analysis called Crisafulli "by far the most frequently accessed state premier", with diaries showing 13 meetings with datacentre executives. Three of those were with NextDC in as many weeks in

August and September, shortly before the premier announced a framework to fast-track datacentre approvals by taking them away from local councils, the report said. Former premier Rob Borbidge lobbies for Viridis Green after making a $20,000 donation to the LNP in October 2025.

The research found 93 registered external lobbyists were available to the companies, and 40 of them had previously been ministers, ministerial advisers or senior public servants. It also cited four senior federal public servants who left to take leadership roles at OpenAI, AirTrunk and CDC, three of them this year.

Transparency International Australia chief executive Clancy Moore said the figures were "just the tip of the iceberg". He said lobbying laws do not cover in-house lobbyists or government relations staff. The group wants lobbying regulated, ministerial diaries published, the revolving door regulated and the ultimate owners of datacentres disclosed.

Amazon and Macquarie have said donations reported by Guardian Australia were not aimed at influencing policy and that their timing was coincidental. Sally Mackenzie, president of the Australian Professional Government Relations Association, said in September that "Lobbying is an important part of the democratic process." NextDC chair Stephen Flynn told Friday's annual general meeting he was "not sure we are great at lobbying as an industry or as a company".

REPORTING FROM

1 **Transparency International Australia** · Data centre lobbying of government a growing corruption risk
2 **the Guardian** · Datacentre bosses met Australian state premiers and ministers almost 120 times in three years, analysis finds | Datacentres

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

DATA CENTRES 2 OF 11

Stockland and EdgeConneX Kemps Creek data centre campus goes on exhibition

The NSW Planning Portal opened exhibition on 19 November 2026 of the environmental impact statement for Stockland and EdgeConneX's Aldington Road campus in Western Sydney, costed at about A$4.99 billion. Consumption figures vary across the planning documents, from 342MW to a 444MW maximum, and submissions close on 17 December 2026.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 3 sources · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The proposal's stated consumption has risen through the planning stages, and it must still meet NSW efficiency, renewable-supply and cumulative-impact tests while facing council concern over its height.

Public exhibition of the environmental impact statement for Stockland's Aldington Road Data Centre at Kemps Creek began on the NSW Planning Portal on 19 November 2026. IDCNOVA described the project as a 50/50 joint venture with operator EdgeConneX, with construction costed at roughly A$4.99 billion before GST. Submissions are accepted until 17 December 2026, and because the proposal is still being assessed as state significant development, exhibition does not amount to approval.

According to IDCNOVA, the EIS covers two buildings holding 33 data halls on a 30.5-hectare site in the Mamre Road industrial precinct, with a maximum IT load of 365MW. The exhibition notice lists maximum power consumption of 444MW, whereas the cost report and greenhouse assessment work from 342MW, made up of 15 halls at 12MW in Building A and 18 at 9MW in Building B. Earlier, amended requirements issued on 15 September 2026 covered up to 360MW of IT power, a measure Unite.AI says differs from the campus-wide maximum.

The campus is aimed at AI and hyperscaler customers, and its halls are designed for both air-cooled and denser liquid-cooled equipment. The EIS proposes 228 rooftop dry chillers for waterless cooling, giving a power usage effectiveness of about 1.25 that rises to an expected 1.36 once acoustic treatment is added. The assessment requirements ask for a PUE of 1.3 or below and a commitment to match operating electricity demand with NSW-based renewable supply.

Power would be drawn from Transgrid's 330kV network through a new Ropes Creek switching station that cuts into Line 14, supplying a 330/33kV substation on site. Half of the substation's 1,000MVA capacity, 500MVA, is

allocated to the data centre, and the other half is held for the neighbouring 200 Aldington Road estate. Symphony Infrastructure would deliver the switching station, and the EIS says network modelling has gone to Transgrid for review.

Construction is put at 44 months from 2027, with operations expected from the first quarter of 2029 and full load by the first quarter of 2031. The cost report estimates about 1,375 full-time equivalent jobs in the build and about 84 staff once operating. Stockland anticipates a determination in 2027, an expectation rather than a fixed date.

Penrith City Council has asked for the application to be referred to the Independent Planning Commission, telling the department in September that the proposed height, then 36.4 metres, was "a significant non-compliance" with the 20-metre control. The EIS now specifies a maximum height of 31.5 metres. Once Stockland responds to submissions, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces or the commission will decide the application.

Chief executive Tarun Gupta told shareholders at the annual meeting that the EdgeConneX partnership will "develop, own and operate an Australian portfolio of data centres." Stockland's update reports about 450MW of secured power across its platform, subject to final design and customer negotiations and not a Kemps Creek capacity. Other Sydney-area records include Wetherill Park, with about 238MW of total capacity and 170MW of IT load, and a 100MW proposal at 192 Narellan Road, Campbelltown.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Unite.AI** · Stockland’s 444 MW Sydney Data Center Plan Enters Public Review
2 **IDCNOVA** · Stockland and EdgeConneX Plan A$5 Billion 365MW AI Data Centre Campus at Kemps Creek, Western Sydney
3 **The Australian Developer** · Stockland's 444 MW Kemps Creek data centre goes on exhibition

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

DATA CENTRES 3 OF 11

Victorian energy officials warned minister data centre plan posed grid risk

Documents obtained by The Age show Victoria's energy department told the minister in March that a push for up to A$25 billion in data centre investment could cause a sudden jump in power demand. The state has since tightened connection and energy supply rules.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 3 sources · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The documents show grid capacity and oversight concerns were raised internally in Victoria months before NextDC's Melbourne setback, and the state has since moved to require ministerial notification of large connections and self-supplied renewable energy. Developers face tighter conditions and local opposition as the 28 November election approaches.

Energy officials in Victoria cautioned the state government that its drive to attract more data centres would create a "major structural challenge" for the electricity system, The Age reported, citing documents it obtained under freedom of information laws. Bloomberg relayed the report and said staff from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action briefed the energy minister on their concerns in March.

The documents said the plan to draw up to A$25 billion of investment into the state could produce a "step change", meaning a sudden surge in energy demand. The briefing also flagged that government had limited oversight of how such projects would affect the grid, and that energy users were increasingly worried about data centre growth, according to The Age.

The government later approved a rule requiring power distributors to notify the energy minister before connecting any project above 30 megawatts, the report said. In September, Victoria also announced that data centres would have to provide their own renewable energy supply.

Bloomberg has previously reported that more than three-quarters of data centres planned near Australia's biggest cities face risk from stretched grids and local opposition. That threatens the country's ambition to become an AI hub for the Asia-Pacific region.

In October, NextDC cut its full-year earnings guidance by a third and paused development plans after protests delayed power supply to a major Melbourne project. The company has pledged to avoid sites near residential areas.

Speaking on News 24 on Saturday 21 November, Simon Croft of the Housing Industry Association, its chief executive of industry and policy, predicted data centres would be a major issue for the state government at the 28 November election. He pointed to inner-city suburbs earmarked for large facilities.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Zaobao English** · Australian energy officials warn more data centres will strain power system
2 **Energy Connects** · Australian Energy Officials Warned of Data Center Risk, Age Says
3 **The Straits Times** · Australian energy officials warn of data centre risk

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

DATA CENTRES 4 OF 11

Lambruk plans 350 MW Mulwala data centre, but grid has room for stage 1 only

A locally backed developer wants to build a three-stage data centre campus next to Essential Energy's Mulwala substation in NSW. The proponent says the network can serve only the first stage, and the site still needs rezoning and state approval.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

Developers are being steered to regional NSW as Transgrid says Sydney capacity is largely committed, but Mulwala shows the limit: the network can serve only stage 1, and later stages hinge on connection studies and upgrades.

Lambruk Mulwala Futures, a company backed by local landholders and domestic investors, is proposing a data centre campus in three stages at Mulwala, New South Wales, with a grid draw of up to 350 MW. The Riverine Herald reported a cost of $4-8 billion and said the site sits roughly 2 km north of the town, on farmland belonging to Douglas Thomas. The Border Mail, which ran the story on the same day, said the advisory firm Lecroma handles planning and community consultation. No development partner has been named; the proponent intends to find one later to build and run the data halls.

The proponent distinguishes the connection limit from the computing load: the halls and associated plant could together pull 350 MW, while the computers themselves would take around 250 MW to 280 MW and the balance would go to cooling and other equipment. The land lies about 390 m from Essential Energy's Mulwala 132 kV zone substation, and the proponent says the utility

has told it the network can support stage 1 only. Stages 2 and 3 depend on connection studies and any network upgrades.

Transgrid's 2026 Transmission Annual Planning Report, as covered by W.Media, puts NSW data centre connection enquiries above 20 GW. Transgrid said Sydney's capacity is largely committed and directed developers towards regional NSW, naming the Hunter and the Riverina, while cautioning that capacity is indicative and varies by project. It projects state data centre peak demand growing from about 660 MW in 2027 to 3.67 GW in 2036. The Border Mail added that AEMO's 2026 Electricity Statement of Opportunities has data centres using about 13 per cent of electricity supplied across the National Electricity Market by 2035-36, from roughly 3 per cent at present.

The proponent points to the NSW Data Centre Guidelines, under which facilities must lower grid demand by a quarter of average load for up to two hours during grid stress, without using diesel. Its response would be batteries plus computing load that can be flexed.

The overall holding is about 168 ha, of which the campus would take about 62 ha, the existing Mulwala Solar Farm would keep about 61 ha and about 27 ha is earmarked for future industry. The solar farm has built about 31 MW of its approved 80 MW. Cooling would use a closed loop filled once from the landowner's bore, so town water would not be drawn on.

Nothing has been approved and no planning document has been lodged. The proponent says existing zoning prohibits a data centre, so the planning rules would have to change. It intends to use the State Significant Development pathway, targeting a scoping report in December 2026, an environmental impact statement in March to April 2027 and public exhibition in mid-2027. The cost range comes solely from the Riverine Herald, which said it had contacted Federation Council for comment. No tenant is named, and no connection agreement exists for stages 2 and 3.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Voltgrid News** · Mulwala Data Centre: 350 MW Campus Proposed by Lambruk Mulwala Futures

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

DATA CENTRES 5 OF 11

IREN details 900MW Wagga campus, but Transgrid capacity not yet secured

IREN's scoping report for the Redbank data centre near Wagga Wagga sets out a 900MW connection to Transgrid's 330kV substation, but no signed connection agreement or capacity allocation has been identified.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 3 sources · 3 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

Two projects around Wagga Wagga represent a potential 2.3GW of demand while planning and connection processes remain unresolved. Whether Redbank proceeds at its proposed scale will depend on capacity allocation under Transgrid's readiness-based policy.

IREN has outlined a proposed data centre campus near Wagga Wagga in regional New South Wales that would need up to 900MW of gross electrical capacity, while the availability of transmission capacity remains subject to the connection process. The Redbank Data Centre would serve roughly 600MW of IT load. A scoping report prepared for IREN subsidiary TAS 1 Holdings places the site at Rowan, beside the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre, around 2.5km from Transgrid's existing 330kV substation.

For the connection, the report envisages three additional 330kV feeder bays at the Wagga Wagga substation, plus three buried cable circuits that would run mostly along Boiling Down Road to a new bulk substation on the site. That on-site facility would step voltage from 330kV to 132kV using four 375MVA transformers, and four further 132/33kV substations would supply the five data halls. IREN says it will pay for the dedicated connection assets, while the final design and any wider network upgrades will be settled with Transgrid through the formal connection process.

The scoping report says planning with Transgrid has run since May 2026, based on a 900MW connection. Asked about Redbank by W.Media, Transgrid said confidentiality requirements under the National Electricity Rules stopped it disclosing details of individual connection enquiries or applications. It pointed to its 2026 Transmission Annual Planning Report, which shows indicative capacity in regional NSW including Wagga Wagga, and said opportunities would depend on each application's scope. Under Transgrid's Network Capacity Allocation Policy, a large-load project gets provisional capacity once a Network Connection Agreement is signed, and the allocation becomes final only if readiness criteria are met within three months. The criteria cover permits, construction contracts, land, long-lead equipment and

financing, and the proponent must have a complete application accepted by Transgrid. The scoping report identifies no signed agreement or formal allocation, and IREN previously said Redbank was outside its announced 5GW secured-power portfolio.

The 900MW figure is the peak gross requirement rather than expected average use. Using a design annualised power usage effectiveness of about 1.3, the report puts average facility demand at full IT load near 780MW.

IREN proposes staged delivery over about six to eight years, with a first 75MW gross block targeted for 2029 and similar blocks at six-month intervals, reaching 900MW by 2035. The design includes about 444 standby diesel generators, which IREN says would not run continuously, and closed-loop direct-to-chip cooling. Annual cooling make-up water is expected to be about 1 per cent of system volume, though the final volume is yet to be determined.

Planning is at an early stage. The NSW Planning Portal lists the project as a State Significant Development at the stage of preparing Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements, and it includes a change to the Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan for what is currently rural land. IREN's report anticipates a construction workforce of up to about 1,100 and more than 200 full-time equivalent operational roles at full capacity.

The Nightly reported that Wagga Wagga City Council finalised a policy on 16 November to seek 1.5 per cent of estimated capital costs for community funds. The Nightly said IREN did not respond to a request for comment and has not signalled agreement, and that the final approval decision rests with the NSW Government.

Redbank is separate from IREN's planned 800MW Bundey development in South Australia, for which a transmission connection agreement has been announced. It also sits close to CDC Data Centres' planned Gregadoo development of up to 1.4GW, and the two together would represent a potential 2.3GW of demand, both subject to planning and connection processes.

REPORTING FROM

1 **W.Media** · IREN details 900MW Wagga campus, but Transgrid capacity not yet secured
2 **ET Datacenters** · IREN plans 900MW Wagga data center, awaits Transgrid capacity, ETDatacenters
3 **The Australian Developer** · Wagga Wagga seeks 1.5% levy on IREN's Redbank data centre

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

POLICY & REGULATION 6 OF 11

Wells confirms small businesses exempt from Digital Duty of Care as Senate talks continue

Communications Minister Anika Wells said on Monday 23 November 2026 that small businesses will be exempt from the Digital Duty of Care Bill, as the government negotiates with the Greens and others to pass it through the Senate in the week of 23 November.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The exemption removes uncertainty for small Australian businesses ahead of a Senate vote, while the open questions on a private right of action and revenue-based penalties will shape how strongly the duty of care can be enforced against large platforms.

Communications Minister Anika Wells has confirmed that small businesses will be exempt from obligations under the government's Digital Duty of Care Bill, as negotiations continue to get the legislation through the Senate in the week beginning Monday 23 November 2026. Wells made the announcement at a doorstop in Parliament House, Canberra, on Monday 23 November 2026.

She said the bill was drafted with rulemaking powers that allow low-risk services to be exempted, and that the government always intended to work with industry on what that would look like. Wells said she was committed to working with small business so the rule treating them as a low-risk service works for them. She said the aim was to mandate a duty of care so that tech companies are obliged to look after their users.

Asked about the Greens' demands, which a journalist described as a right for individuals to sue and a change to penalties based on a percentage of revenue, Wells said she and Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young had spoken a lot over the weekend. She noted that a Senate report on Friday recommended the government consider a private right of action. Wells said the government was working through what that might look like, as well as the request for amendments on revenue as a penalty. She said there were many considerations to settle and that she would negotiate with parliamentarians and with cabinet.

On the Coalition, Wells said it had "voluntarily benched themselves" on the bill, and called that baffling given the weight of online safety for children.

On AI and copyright, Wells said the government was working through a model with media stakeholders and wanted AI frontier services in Australia working for Australians. She did not say whether sectors such as music might be carved out, saying the government would keep talking to everyone to find a solution all parties can live with. Asked about the risk that AI companies might leave if laws change, she pointed to the social media minimum age laws, saying platforms had been predicted to depart but a year on were thriving. She said anyone seeking profit from Australians needs to uphold Australian laws.

Wells was also asked about reports that Google had ended a deal with small publishers, saying it could not make payments because of the way the news bargaining incentive works. She said companies that do not do deals will pay more under the laws, and that it is for the companies to decide in their own interests. Wells said the government believed it had created settings that best incentivise deals for Australian journalists.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Minister for Communications** · Doorstop - Parliament House, Canberra

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

CARRIERS & NETWORKS 7 OF 11

Digicel PNG wins 15-year 5G spectrum licence from regulator NICTA

Digicel PNG has been granted a 15-year 5G licence by Papua New Guinea's regulator but has not set a commercial launch date. Vodafone PNG had already committed to a 5G rollout, and the three main operators have signed infrastructure sharing deals.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The licence puts Digicel alongside Vodafone PNG in the 5G race in a Pacific market close to Australia, with shared towers and set coverage targets shaping how quickly the rollout reaches people.

Digicel PNG announced on Friday that NICTA, the country's National Information and Communications Technology Authority, has granted it a 15-year licence to use 5G spectrum. Developing Telecoms reported that the operator gave no date for a commercial launch. Digicel said it will keep working with NICTA on planning the deployment and developing products, and will

announce coverage areas, compatible devices, products and availability later.

Frédéric Debord, named Digicel PNG chief executive the week before, said the licence is the base for rolling out 5G, which is expected to bring faster speeds, better reliability and more network capacity to consumers and businesses. Debord said in a statement that the licence "creates the foundation for the next generation of connectivity and will unlock the benefits of 5G for our customers, businesses and communities". He added that 5G could speed digital transformation in healthcare, education, agriculture, mining, banking and government services.

Digicel PNG finished end-to-end 5G readiness testing in July 2026, and said the results confirmed its network can carry 5G.

In September 2026 NICTA said it was prepared to issue licences in the 2.6 GHz and 3.5 GHz bands to mobile operators it considered qualified. At that point the regulator said Vodafone PNG had already committed to launching 5G across the National Capital District and at least one other city within 18 months. The rollout targets include covering at least 20% of the population within 36 months and 30% within 60 months.

Digicel, Vodafone and state-owned Telikom PNG have also agreed to share towers and infrastructure in recent months, aiming to speed up 5G deployment. Vodafone struck the country's first sharing and co-location deal with Telikom in late August, then another with Digicel PNG in September. Digicel's own tower sharing agreement with Telikom followed last month.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Developing Telecoms** · Papua New Guinea moves closer to 5G as Digicel bags spectrum licence

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

POLICY & REGULATION 8 OF 11

Data centres become a Victorian election issue as parties split on gas, planning and buffers

Community opposition to data centres has moved quickly into Victoria's state election campaign, with Labor touting new rules and the Coalition open to gas power but light on policy detail, ABC News reported.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 3 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

Whichever party forms government will have to balance data centre investment that is driving Victoria's economic growth against community opposition, with unresolved questions over energy supply, planning pathways and projects already in the assessment queue.

Data centres have become a live issue in the Victorian state election, with the Coalition under Opposition leader Jess Wilson reluctant to spell out how it would manage the multi-billion dollar industry, ABC News reported on 23 November 2026. The state government has announced new data centre regulations, including a ban near homes and schools, after community opposition became impossible to ignore. In November 2025 then-premier Jacinta Allan pledged to make Victoria the country's capital for data centres.

Pollster and former political strategist Kos Samaras of Redbridge Group said concern had gone from nothing to a major issue within months. Six months earlier data centres barely rated in Redbridge focus groups, but voters now raise them unprompted and show awareness of their size and energy demands. Samaras said the industry had "a lot of social licence work ahead of it" as opposition grows. He said data centre policies were unlikely to drive votes on their own in an election dominated by Big Build corruption, potholes, crime and the cost of living, but that they feed a perception that the political class is out of touch.

Labor has proposed sustainability rules, including a requirement that data centres supply their own renewable energy. The Coalition says data centres would be built in designated precincts away from homes, but it did not directly tell the ABC whether it would match or better Labor's rules. On Saturday Wilson said the Coalition was open to data centres being powered by gas, although some experts believe developing unproven gas reserves could take at least five years. The Coalition told the ABC the details were yet to be developed, but that it broadly supported data centres producing more energy than they use. A Labor spokesperson said the government had introduced the

"toughest data centres rules in Australia" and accused the Liberals of having no plan.

The Liberals have said they would wind back the Development Facilitation Program, the fast-track planning scheme, while keeping a pathway for significant, complex projects. Whittlesea council, which argued against the scheme because it let developers bypass councils, welcomed the move. Whittlesea mayor Lawrie Cox said that locals have been ignored, adding that councils and residents have the best local information. Asked whether councils would get a say on pending proposals, a Liberal spokesperson said the party would seek advice from the Victorian Public Service. Nine data centre projects are lodged under the program, and Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenny declined to decide on them before caretaker mode began.

One of them is the proposed Victorian AI hub at Plumpton in Melbourne's north-west, which would span 350 hectares with a capacity of 2.4 gigawatts. The Plumpton Action Group formed in response, and co-founder Ella Bourne expects data centres to be a central issue in Sydenham, one of several Labor seats considered at risk. A petition seeking a full assessment of the project has more than 6,000 signatures. Bourne criticised the fast-track scheme, Labor's proposed 150-metre buffer from homes and the exemption of projects already being assessed, and said she wants "an immediate statewide moratorium until there are proper regulations in place". Liberal, One Nation and even Labor candidates have campaigned against the development, and Labor MP Katie Hall opposed NextDC's proposed West Footscray expansion.

The Greens want a moratorium on new AI data centres and compensation for affected communities. One Nation would ban new data centres on agricultural land and require environmental assessments and community consultation before approval near homes. The pre-election budget update said Victoria's economic growth was being "primarily driven by data centre investment".

REPORTING FROM

1 **ABC News** · Concern about data centres go from 'zero to 100' ahead of state election

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

POLICY & REGULATION 9 OF 11

NZ regulator plans binding billing transparency rules for mobile providers

The Commerce Commission intends to make One NZ, 2degrees and Spark meet mandatory billing disclosure standards, after concluding that voluntary approaches fell short. A draft code is due in early December.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

If adopted, the code would convert guidelines that the Commission says have not delivered consistent results into enforceable obligations for New Zealand's three mobile networks, including a prompt for customers to consider alternative plans.

New Zealand's Commerce Commission intends to impose mandatory billing disclosure requirements on One NZ, 2degrees and Spark New Zealand, having concluded that voluntary steps did not work. The Commission dated its letter 19 November and put it on its website on 23 November. It floats annual summaries for customers, plus access to 12 months of usage and spending records. The letter signals an intention to regulate only, and no final code exists yet.

Telecommunications Commissioner Tristan Gilbertson wrote: "Voluntary commitments, independent monitoring and guidelines have not secured consistent and enduring delivery." The code would draw on the retail service quality powers in the Telecommunications Act. A draft is expected in early December.

The design pairs two routes to information: records that customers can open themselves, and a yearly prompt sent to them, with neither replacing the other. Each annual summary would have to carry a prominent nudge to consider other plans, while app or portal access would be a distinct requirement. The Commission says providers would be free to choose how they present the material.

A Consumer NZ review dated 5 October scored Spark at 69 per cent, One NZ at 67 per cent and 2degrees at 46 per cent. Those scores measure transparency rather than network performance. 2degrees did not send annual summaries between July 2025 and July 2026, which Consumer NZ tied to IT-platform data problems, though the review said summaries have resumed. Consumer NZ said Spark's annual email had omitted usage details and best-plan recommendations, and instead directed customers to its app or website.

Consumer NZ found the One NZ app showed two to three months of history. One NZ's billing guide refers to 12 months of online bills for One NZ A accounts, but that is an archive of bills and does not show a year of mobile usage set against plan allowances. The Commission's guidelines from November 2025 say a full year is useful because it captures seasonal patterns of use. They also ask for call, text and data figures to be shown separately, next to plan fees and extra spending.

The code is still a proposal, and its obligations and implementation arrangements will be consulted on. The Commission plans to publish the draft and consultation papers in early December, then weigh submissions before settling a final code. The letter gives no implementation date.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Bez Kabli** · New Zealand plans binding mobile billing transparency rules

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

CARRIERS & NETWORKS 10 OF 11

Vector Fibre recovery continues after Auckland CBD fire damaged basement fibre

Vector Fibre crews completed 11 planned cable batches of splicing and rerouting on Sunday 22 November 2026, as recovery from a Fanshawe Street fire in Auckland's CBD moves into a third day. Upstream carrier links are restored, but some dark fibre, DWDM and Vector circuits remain affected.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The incident shows how a single building's basement can concentrate dark fibre, DWDM and carrier paths, and how the loss of backup power can widen an outage after the fire itself is out.

Vector Fibre field teams completed 11 planned cable batches of fibre splicing and rerouting on Sunday 22 November 2026, as the multi-day recovery from an Auckland CBD building fire continued. Vector said the run rate improved as work progressed, helped by splice-location preparation done earlier and an additional field team working in parallel. Field teams stood down on Sunday

evening, while engineering and network teams planned further restoration batches for Monday.

The incident began on Friday 20 November 2026, when a well-involved fire broke out at a Fanshawe Street building housing Vector Fibre infrastructure. Emergency services cordoned off the area. The status page, which appears to be run by an operator whose own network was affected, reported impacts to some Vector circuits, dark fibre customer services delivered over Vector Fibre, core network links and upstream carrier paths. That operator rerouted core traffic over alternative paths where it could and warned of path changes and differences in latency or performance.

By early afternoon on Friday the basement fire had been extinguished, but the site remained under FENZ control and Vector could not assess the damage, so no estimated restoration time was available. Access was granted that evening, and an initial assessment found extensive damage to fibre infrastructure through the basement, along with the loss of both generator and UPS services. Building access stayed restricted to accompanied assessment, and structural clearance for permanent restoration work was outstanding. Vector warned that losing backup power raised the risk of further impacts, including to services that had stayed up.

On Saturday 21 November, Vector said it had seen the anticipated extra service impacts after UPS battery capacity ran out and the site generator was taken offline. It said it was talking to the site controllers about whether the generator could safely return to service.

The restoration strategy is to build alternative fibre routes that bypass the affected site. Splicing and restoration work ran around the clock from Saturday, with the first batch expected to be low volume while teams proved the end-to-end process. By Saturday evening a small number of customer services had been restored, which Vector said was consistent with its expectations. Field teams worked until about 01:00 on Sunday and resumed between 08:30 and 09:00.

At 3:07 PM NZDT on Sunday, the status page reported that links to previously disrupted upstream carriers were restored and upstream capacity to those carriers was back to normal. Some customer dark fibre, DWDM and Vector circuits were still affected, along with reduced resiliency on some core network links. Vector's network operations centre is running service verification checks and any logical configuration or migration work needed as field work translates into restored services.

REPORTING FROM

1 **status.vetta.nz** · Incident - Auckland CBD fire: Vector Fibre services - 20/11 - Status Page

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

AI INFRASTRUCTURE 11 OF 11

US chip curbs stall US$6.5bn of Asian GPU loans, including Firmus's US$3bn

New US export rules in force from 19 November have put more than US$6.5bn of South-East Asian GPU financings, including a US$3bn deal for Australia's Firmus Technologies, under lender scrutiny, IFR reported.

Best Effort desk · Tue 24 Nov 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

Firmus, an Australian company, has a US$3bn Indonesian GPU financing caught in the new licensing regime, and bankers say lending for Asia Pacific AI capacity could slow while the rules are clarified.

Asian debt deals linked to AI and digital infrastructure, including more than US$6.5bn now in the market, are at risk after Washington tightened controls on overseas access to advanced chips, IFR reported on 23 November 2026. The rules from the US Bureau of Industry and Security came into effect on 19 November. A licence is needed to ship or transfer advanced chips to data centres that offer covered customers, including Chinese companies, remote access above 12 million units of total processing performance. Separate licensing requirements cover some chip shipments involving Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Operators whose arrangements pre-date the rules have 90 days from 19 November to secure a licence.

Three GPU-related borrowings sit at the centre of the lender review. Australian AI infrastructure company Firmus Technologies is seeking US$3bn to deploy chips in Indonesia. Indonesian provider Zankore is raising US$3.1bn, and Singapore's Aolani is seeking US$480m. Firmus is seeking a loan-and-bond package to buy Nvidia GB300 chips for Indonesia, which is one of the five countries named in the rules. Zankore's loan went to senior syndication in early October and reportedly drew an encouraging response, but bankers said it could be delayed while lenders wait for details of Nvidia's proposed backstop. Nvidia's interim CEO Colette Kress warned this month that the company could walk away from some financing guarantees.

Chinese-linked offtake is most exposed because the rules look at the ultimate user of the capacity rather than where the chips sit. Aolani's loan funds 97 racks of Nvidia GB300 servers in Kuala Lumpur for remote use by ByteDance, the offtaker. The curbs raise doubts over whether ByteDance can use the capacity as planned and keep paying if it cannot, and recoveries would depend partly on what lenders could realise from the pledged GPUs. Epoch Digital's US$488m borrowing for a Malaysian hyperscale data centre with ByteDance as offtaker is not GPU-backed, but its 30 November commitment deadline is expected to be pushed back and a lender presentation has moved to 24 November.

A senior loan banker in Singapore said, "In the current climate, GPU and data centre financings from South-East Asia could slow for at least six to 12 months". A loan banker at an international bank said, "We are holding off on all GPU and data centre deals until we have a clearer picture of how the new controls apply".

Lenders are weighing whether borrowers can stay on track by switching to lower-specification GPUs, replacing offtakers or securing US licences. Bankers said lower-spec chips could bring aggregate performance under the remote-access threshold, though destination and end-user controls could still apply. Replacing the offtaker could ease licensing risk, but lenders would want to know who is actually using the chips and whether they could check it.

Asia Pacific data centre operators raised more than US$43bn in publicly announced debt in 2025 and 2026, according to Cushman & Wakefield, and industry experts estimate GPU financing needs exceed four times what was raised for core and shell construction.

REPORTING FROM

1 **IFR** · US curbs hit Asian AI loans

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.