



# Data centre in Hume

By Rebecca Thistleton

HUME will be the site of the proposed controversial data centre and power station.

ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope blamed political interference from the Greens and Liberals for "risking a billion dollar project" for political purposes, when the new site was revealed on Friday.

Mr Stanhope said the task force employed to explore alternative sites still found the previous Macarthur location to be the most suitable.

"At the request of the consortium behind the data centre, the government has identified an alternative site in Hume. The taskforce has deemed the site, Block 20 Section 23 Hume, the next most suitable after the

Mugga Lane site," Mr Stanhope said.

He said the land would need to be made available to the consortium by way of special legislation, which would allow a finalisation of a new development application within the same timeframe as the current DA – by March 2009.

"It is only reasonable, in the circumstances, that the consortium behind the development not be disadvantaged by the political interference in the planning process by the Liberals and Greens," Mr Stanhope said.

Greens MLA Amanda Bresnan said she supported the legislation that would soon be passed to allow the development application at the new site to proceed and was satisfied the

March 2009 deadline would be met.

"The legislation proposed is time specific and site specific, it is not a blanket approach and it will be limited to this one site," she said.

Liberal opposition leader Zed Seselja said he also supported the legislation, "in principle".

However, both Ms Bresnan and Mr Seselja disagreed with Mr Stanhope's remarks that he was "deeply disappointed" their respective parties had interfered with the planning process purely for political gain, and that the future of the data centre development had been "threatened" by the Liberal opposition and Greens MLAs.

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MS Bresnan said the Greens supported the development as long as it was carried out in the community's best interest with their voices heard.

"We've always said we support the development on an appropriate site, and we believe this industrial site fulfils that requirement," she said, adding that the Greens supported the boost to industry in the ACT the data centre would provide.

She said they also supported the processing of the development application through the merit track of the planning system.

Mr Seselja said Mr Stanhope's claims that the Liberals and Greens had interfered in the planning

process showed an ignorance of residents' desires.

"This is a much better outcome," Mr Seselja said.

"What's been shown by last week's events is that we have in fact protected the people of Tuggeranong while ensuring their safety and also the future of this project."

The unleased and unoccupied Territory land is zoned industrial but, at just 12.6 hectares, it is considerably smaller than the 17-hectare Mugga Lane site.

Mr Seselja said the opposition had already received positive feedback from constituents regarding the site change.