



Media Release

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Updated report card on Tasmania's infrastructure

The release today of the Engineers Australia 2010 Tasmania Infrastructure Report Card indicates progress in some areas of Tasmania's infrastructure over the past 5 years, but the overall picture clearly shows that the majority of infrastructure categories continue to fall within the areas of needing major or critical changes.

The Tasmania Division President of Engineers Australia, Grant Atherton, said "While the 2010 infrastructure report card indicates progress since 2005 in a couple of areas of Tasmania's infrastructure, the overall picture clearly shows that Tasmania's infrastructure is stressed, and is mostly rated as either just adequate or poor.

"Compared with 2005, reasonable improvements have been made in the area of Potable Water and there has been a marginal improvement for Wastewater, and the ratings for State Roads, Stormwater and Electricity have remained the same.

"However, the ratings for National Roads, Local Roads and Ports have slipped over the past five years and it is very disturbing that Rail received an F rating on the basis that it is inadequate for current and future purposes," Atherton said.

The 2010 report card reviewed infrastructure categories across energy, telecommunications, transport and water and assigned ratings * within the scales of A – F, and provides many comparisons with the initial 2005 Tasmania Infrastructure Report Card. The 2010 report card includes a rating for rail, airports, irrigation, and gas, which were not rated in 2005.

Of the categories reviewed in the 2010 report - 5 get a good "B" – needing minor changes - 6 get a "C" - needing major changes; 1 gets a "D" - needing critical changes; and 1 gets an "F" – inadequate for current and future purposes.

The "B" ratings were given to Airports (B), Ports (B minus), Potable Water (B minus), Irrigation (B minus), and Electricity (B minus). The "C" ratings cover National Roads (C plus), State Roads (C), Roads Overall (C minus), Wastewater (C), Stormwater (C minus), Gas (C), and Telecommunications (C plus). The "D" rating is for Local Roads, and the "F" rating is for Rail.

Atherton acknowledged that the issues surrounding Tasmania's infrastructure are complex and expectations of overnight solutions are not realistic but he said, "If Tasmania is to live up to its potential as an island community, with a unique natural and cultural environment and relatively prosperous lifestyle, action needs to be taken now to get our infrastructure performance up to speed.

"Our Government must move now to not only develop a long-term integrated infrastructure plan for the State, but that plan must include a solidly-based implementation program that is highly inclusive of local government, industry, the professions and the community.

“The quantum of funding for infrastructure must be increased and include incentives for private sector investment, and the appropriate allocation of risk to deliver the best project outcomes for all stakeholders.

“There also must be a parallel strategy implemented to grow the skills base of Tasmania to deliver and maintain our infrastructure projects.

“Also, as a practical and inexpensive step right now, it’s time to move on driving closer cooperation and resource sharing across our local government areas to deliver new infrastructure.

“But it is equally important to also to lock-in the critical means to upgrade and maintain new and existing infrastructure that local governments are often left to struggle with long after the fan-fare of a grand opening,” Atherton said.

The report includes comprehensive analysis and comment and includes the ratings table below for the current and past Tasmanian and National Report Cards.

Infrastructure Type	Tasmania 2010	Tasmania 2005	National 2005	National 2001
Roads overall	C-	Not rated	C	Not rated
National roads	C+	B-	C+	C
State roads	C	C	C	C-
Local roads	D	D+	C-	D
Rail	F	Not rated	C-	D-
Ports	B-	B	C+	B
Airports	B	Not rated	B	B
Potable water	B-	C Metropolitan D Non-metropolitan	B-	C
Wastewater	C	C- Metropolitan D Non-metropolitan	C+	C-
Stormwater	C-	C-	C-	D
Irrigation	B-	Not rated	C-	D-
Electricity	B-	B-	C+	B-
Gas	C	Not rated	C+	C
Telecommunications	C+	Not rated	Not rated	B

Further Information: Summaries of each infrastructure type, grade and comment are attached and a copy of the full 178-page report is available at www.engineersaustralia.org.au/irctas . The report card is the second in the series that will be completed for all of Australia by November.

(* **The ratings** have been based on an assessment of asset condition, asset availability and reliability; asset management and sustainability. An “A” means very good and the infrastructure is fit for its current and anticipated future purposes; “B” is good, with minor changes needed to meeting current and future needs; “C” is adequate, but major changes required; “D” is poor, with critical changes required; and “F” is inadequate).

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Engineers Australia is the common name of The Institution of Engineers Australia with a membership of 92,000.

The following summarises the 2010 Tasmanian Infrastructure Report Card ratings.

Infrastructure Type	Grade	Comment
Roads overall National roads State roads Local roads	C- C+ C D	These ratings recognise that local roads are generally poor and failures are common due to the employment of reactive maintenance practices. State roads have maintained their standard, with the additional expenditure on these roads resulting in some of the backlog of work being addressed. National roads have deteriorated due to increasing freight usage and road pavements exceeding their design life, while the significant investment on national roads has principally been catch-up expenditure.
Rail	F	This rating recognises that infrastructure is inadequate for current and future purposes, and that the magnitude of the works required to provide any reasonable utility from this infrastructure is enormous.
Ports	B-	This rating recognises that while capacity at ports is currently adequate, over the longer term, substantial problems will arise due to a lack of efficient and effective integration in the provision of road, rail and port infrastructure.
Airports	B	This rating recognises that the airport infrastructure has improved considerably over the last few years, and is adequate to meet existing and foreseeable future demand.
Potable Water	B-	This rating recognises that the current infrastructure is largely adequate and the 2009 reforms of the water sector will significantly improve water services, provided the committed funding materialises.
Wastewater	C	This rating recognises that improvements have been made in recent years to infrastructure in problem areas and there have been significant increases in the volumes of recycled water used. The 2009 reforms of the water and sewerage sector will significantly improve sewerage services, provided the committed funding materialises.
Stormwater	C-	This rating recognises that significant localised stormwater initiatives have been implemented and the application of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) is becoming widespread. However, the State-wide stormwater strategy is yet to be approved and funding for stormwater projects secured.
Irrigation	B-	This rating recognises that there has been a significant expansion in irrigation infrastructure and improved irrigation practice. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of the expanded irrigation systems.
Electricity	B-	This rating recognises that Tasmania's generation system coupled with the interconnector has high supply reliability and security. It also reflects the ongoing improvements that are underway to enhance the quality of the transmission and distribution networks.
Gas	C	This rating recognises that the assets of the gas sector are of a high quality. However, supply is at risk of major disruption due to the single transmission pipeline and expansion of the distribution system has stopped.
Telecommunications	C+	This rating recognises that fixed telephone services are excellent and mobile phone coverage is generally adequate in major population centres and transport corridors. There is generally sufficient capacity in broadband infrastructure to meet present demand, but utilisation is price-dependent. Broadband demand is rapidly growing and difficult to predict with technological advances and new services. While intrastate backhaul is available, many places are served by only one link, which results in security and pricing issues. Interstate backhaul choice has improved with the commissioning of the Basslink fibre cable.