



# Media Statement

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## **Report card confirms concerns about much of South Australia's infrastructure**

The release today of the *2005 South Australian Infrastructure Report Card* by Engineers Australia is confirmation that South Australia's infrastructure ranges from good, to requiring urgent attention.

Engineers Australia has presented the South Australian community with an infrastructure report card of one B plus, three B minus, one C plus, three Cs, two C minus and three Ds across the areas of roads, rail, water, electricity and gas.

Mark Gobbie, spokesperson for the Engineers Australia's report card committee, said, "The infrastructure report card confirms that with a rating of D in the areas of regional rail networks, local roads and stormwater, that major or critical actions are required.

"However, electricity, gas, potable water in the metropolitan area and the metropolitan rail and tram networks are rated good although, as always, on-going commitment is needed to maintain their fitness for current and future purposes."

The assessments were based on asset condition, asset availability, asset management, sustainability and security, and were compiled by Engineers Australia in association with leading experts across the relevant engineering disciplines, with GHD Pty Ltd as consultants.

"It is clear that the way in which infrastructure is planned, funded, managed and maintained in South Australia needs urgent attention, and it is acknowledged that recent strategies announced by the South Australian Government provide a good basis for improvement.

"But, successful outcomes from the government's strategies will only be delivered if there is a core partnership between all governments, business and the broader community to develop a long term, sustainable focus," Mark Gobbie said.

The report card highlights that planning and funding for South Australian infrastructure projects has often been fragmented and sometimes short-term. The report highlights that strategic planning for infrastructure needs to incorporate long-term, 20-year-plus, schedules of works and budgets.

Mark Gobbie said, "What is urgently needed for South Australia's infrastructure is a cooperative review to ensure that the funding is approved on a priority basis across all infrastructure, and that maintenance and upgrading, as well as provision for replacement, is locked into decisions. The Government's strategic and infrastructure plans are acknowledged as significant starting points in this process.

"An example highlighted in the report, is that local roads are given a poor D when Councils can only spend about one-third of the estimated \$160 million that is required each year, and within 10 years the backlog will have grown to \$240 million.

Some other highlights of the report card included:

- regional corporations should be established by local government to better use available resources, seek funding and prioritise projects;
- a lack of planning control during the development of major cities and towns had resulted in increasing pressure on stormwater infrastructure; and
- general performances in both the gas and electricity sectors are strong, but increasing reliance on a national system for electricity may result in some deterioration in future supply reliability.

While this report card identified the need for more funding, better coordination and more integrated strategic planning for South Australia, this issue is Australia-wide.

High priority by both the Federal and South Australian governments, along with support by the private sector, is needed before many current and future key infrastructure needs can be met.

Engineers Australia believed that the recent Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting was a chance for implementing national leadership for cross border cooperation on infrastructure, and it was disappointing that COAG only declared 'in-principle' support by setting up some working groups.

Some direct comparisons were available with the averages for Australia that were reported in the Engineers Australia *2001 Australian Infrastructure Report Card*. Those direct comparisons showed: SA national roads at C, state roads at C minus and local roads at D, as well as electricity at B minus and stormwater at D were the same ratings as for Australia; and SA gas at plus (over C); metropolitan potable water at B minus (over C); and metropolitan wastewater at C plus (over C minus) were rated higher.

Engineers Australia has also released report cards for New South Wales in 2003, Queensland in 2004, and Victoria in 2005 and some direct, available comparisons with South Australia include:

National Roads	SA 'C'	Vic 'C'	NSW 'C plus'	Qld 'C plus'.
State Roads	SA 'C minus'	Vic 'C minus'	NSW 'C plus'	Qld 'C'
Local Roads	SA 'D'	Vic 'C minus'	NSW 'C minus'	Qld 'C'
Electricity	SA 'B minus'	Vic 'C'	NSW 'B'	Qld 'D plus'.

"The Engineers Australia *2005 South Australian Infrastructure Report Card* provides both a strategic overview for overall planning, and a benchmark for the business sector and the community in judging the implications of neglecting infrastructure priorities.

"However, to move forward, we need a coordinated approach across all levels of government, the private sector and the community in general if we are to achieve the required improvements," Mark Gobbie concluded.

The summary of the South Australian ratings and the 104-page report is available at [www.infrastructurereportcard.org.au](http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org.au).

**Ratings:** **A (Very Good)** Infrastructure is fit for its current and anticipated purpose in terms of infrastructure condition, committed investment, regulatory appropriateness and compliance, and planning processes; **B (Good)** Minor changes required in one or more of the above areas; **C (Adequate)** Major changes required in one or more areas; **D (Poor)** Critical changes needed in one or more of the above areas.

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*Engineers Australia* is the common name of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, with a membership of 80,000.