



THE IRISH ACADEMY OF
ENGINEERING
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF GREAT CHANGE

ACADEMY NEWS –8th January 2026 – Academy launch new Eastern Region with accelerating infrastructure briefing.

The Academy celebrated the new year with the launch of the new Eastern Region on 8th January 2026. The Academy already has very active Northern, Southern and Western regions and half of the Academy members reside in the eastern region.

President Sean Finlay thanked Martin Hogan FIAE for chairing the new region and John Flanagan FIAE for taking on the role of deputy chair.



Sean Finlay, Tom Leahy, Imelda Mannion, Sean O'Driscoll, Martin Hogan

To celebrate the launch, Seán O'Driscoll and Imelda Mannion, two independent members of the government's Accelerating Infrastructure Task Force (AITF) delivered an in depth briefing of the conception and delivery of the [Accelerating Infrastructure report and action plan](#), which was adopted by Government.

Seán has previously served as a Partner with KPMG before moving to Glen Dimplex where he ultimately became CEO and then President. He is currently Chair of the ESRI Council and Chair of the

UCC governing authority. He has served the state in several leadership roles most notably the Action Plan for Jobs which targeted 100,000 jobs initially but ultimately delivered in excess of 1 million jobs.

Imelda, an engineering graduate from the University of Galway, is a senior infrastructure and business leader with 25 years of international experience working across engineering enterprise strategy, and system-wide delivery reform. Imelda has held several executive roles including Global VP for Jacobs where she led a \$1.3 Trillion capital portfolio and led the global program business which included strategy, services and talent.

During their talk, they highlighted that Jack Chambers, as Minister, and Chair of the Task Force had taken brave steps to ensure this would be an official government publication. The forming and development of the group was discussed, which was quite interesting and we are assured it has led to a high performing team of permanent and elected government, independent experts and semi-state infrastructure leaders.

The plan assigns very specific responsibilities and timelines ensuring that it is a live working document and that they will complete the first quarterly review by the end of January. They were thankful for the input by the Academy and its members and encouraged by the reactions of the state mechanisms to their plan. The plan is designed to take the country out of its infrastructure emergency and they highlighted positive planning and other outcomes since its publication which appear to align with the twin themes of the report; "Common Good" and "Common Sense". They committed to returning for a discussion next year to report on progress.

The event was very well attended by Academy fellows and patrons, the President and Director General of Engineers Ireland (EI) and the President-elect and Director General of the Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland (ACEI) and invited guests.

The IAE, EI and ACEI made detailed submissions last year to the Accelerating Infrastructure task force and also the [Joint Oireachtas committee on Infrastructure and NDP delivery](#).

President Sean Finlay said "The presentation was concise, coherent and convincing; the themes of Common Good and Common Sense really capture the underlying objectives of this Plan, which can transform how we implement the NDP."

Academy Special advisor and past President Tom Leahy finished the event by outlining the work of the Academy to actively support the work of the task force including using the IAE International networking by providing a detailed legal briefing from France on how the "common good" is central to European Countries and demonstrating how other European Countries have also accelerated delivery of infrastructure fully in accordance with EU Law.

Tom reminded the audience that the Academy has a very busy year ahead bookended by:

- The launch of the new Eastern Region on 8th January 2026 (This event)
- Co-hosting the [international Euro-CASE Conference 2026](#) in Belfast on 19th November 2026 with the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAE).

Tom proposed a vote of thanks and the audience delivered a standing ovation to Sean O'Driscoll and Imelda Mannion for their in depth briefing and assured the AITF of its continuing active support.

We take this opportunity to thank all our Patrons and Fellows, whose voluntary efforts continue to provide thought leadership in times of great change.