



Ingrid Miley puts questions to the first panel of speakers at Conference 2026

Political Engagement	President's Address	Conference 2026	ACEI in the News	Member Survey	Sector Updates
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Political Affairs Update:

The ACEI Executive and Secretariat were again busy this month on the stakeholder engagement front:

- Attended the Government's 'Accelerating Infrastructure Productivity and Capacity Working Group'.
- Met with the Department of Education and Youth.
- Attended the Construction Sector Group Meeting.
- Began negotiations with Uisce Eireann and OPW on key issues of concern.
- Met with Independent TD, Deputy Barry Heneghan.
- Engaged with Sean O'Driscoll and Feargal O'Rourke of the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce.

Overview:

After years of educating stakeholders on issues for consulting engineers, May 2026 felt like a moment of real movement. Those in attendance at the Annual Conference heard from Uisce Eireann's Maria O'Dwyer who gave a fascinating insight into the growing competition among contracting authorities to hit key deadlines set out by the Minister. To this end, we have been in early negotiations with both Uisce Eireann and OPW on setting up 'clearing house' mechanisms to clarify issues and resolve them now. Members of the Executive have also met with the Department for Education and Youth on other core issues.

All of this is to say that the leadership shown by Minister Chambers is trickling down into the bodies below. Nothing is guaranteed, but the room provided by the Accelerating Infrastructure Report has created a new atmosphere of collaboration with industry. We are working directly with members of the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce and they are fully aware and supportive of changes that need to happen. The Secretariat and Executive will continue working in this space in the months ahead and we ask all members to keep toiling on the key issues for us all: NCCs, collateral warranties and other contractual sensitivities. If you need support, please contact DG, Shane Dempsey or Political Analyst, Dónal O'Neill.

President's Address:

Dear All,

Since our last ConsultA, our 2026 Annual Conference has taken place in Croke Park. I thank all member firms who supported the conference and participated in the events on the day. Our theme this year was Engineering Ireland's Future, with keynote speaker Professor Bent Flyvbjerg speaking on Planning Fallacy, Reference Class Forecasting, Risk Management and how boosting the state's risk appetite can accelerate critical infrastructure projects.

Minister Jack Chambers spoke to the Government's commitment to deliver against the €275Bn spend on infrastructure delivery over the coming decade, that the practices of the past economic cycles whereby capital spending would be the first to be compromised would not be repeated. The Minister also spoke to the need to issue Risk Appetite Statements to government departments setting expectations from government where the political system needed to back decision makers, putting speed and delivery over multiple layers of circular processes.

In the first of our Leaders panel discussions, Is infrastructure delivery accelerating? Sean O'Driscoll (Taskforce), Prof. Brian Caulfield, Ferga Kane (EY), Maria O'Dwyer (UE) and Sean Keyes (Progress Ireland) provided insight on their observed experience this year where it was noted that the first component of enabling legislation as recommended by the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce is expected to be passed through the Dail before the summer recess. We then paused for lunch to hear from Ger Howlin and Sinead O'Sullivan on their views on what they'd heard so far - a memorable segment!

We had a very informative 8x7 Session with leadership reflections from Colette O'Shea (Ramboll), Niall O' Brien (Egis, Future Leader), Graeme Tinney (AON), John Doyle (DCU), Gemma MCarthy (Mott MacDonald), Lisa Ainsworth (DCU), Darragh Gaffney (Leyton) and Patrick O'Donnell (Onesto).

The second of our Leaders panel discussions focused on "Ireland Consulting – Engineering the Global Economy" with lively contributions from François Basset (EGIS), Joe Burns (Arup),



Kevin Rudden (Garland) and Richard O'Farrell (EDC). We completed our third Leaders panel discussion "What actions must we take to be more valued as a sector?" with Jim Oliver (Nicolas O'Dwyer), Maurice Gillen (Jacobs), John Brennan (ORS), Tim Murnane (Punch Consulting) and Neasa Fine Kane (Comms). Finally, we completed an energising closing from ACEI Director General Shane Dempsey, speaking to the launch of the ACEI three-year Strategic Plan.

In my opening address to the conference, I noted the generational capital investments now taking place in Ireland within the National Development Plan, Housing Delivery at Scale, Climate Transition and Digital Infrastructure.

We must recognise the change happening around us as our profession is being squeezed by global scale, by client consolidation of procurement into larger frameworks and programmes and by vertical integration as Contractors develop their inhouse design teams.

There is opportunity for member firms in this space but capturing that opportunity requires intent. It requires clarity and leadership from all of us where we should not allow today's problems cloud our planning for tomorrow. Let's focus on the important rather than the urgent and become much more future focused in our thinking as an Industry. In short, each member firm should be deliberate in choosing their strategic direction over the coming three years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ciarán McGovern".

Ciarán McGovern
President of ACEI

Annual Conference sets new standard...

And so it has come to pass. ACEI's Annual Conference, 2026 was the Association's largest and most significant yet. The venue, level of speakers present and the number of delegates in attendance were all testament to the new ambition, both of the state in funding infrastructure, and consulting engineers in delivering it. The Conference began with a speech from Minister Jack Chambers, followed by a Q&A where Ingrid Miley queried whether confidence remained in the delivery of the Accelerating Infrastructure Report. The Minister was robust in his response highlighting key projects in Waterford and Dublin which has bypassed months of secondary approval processes, accelerating infrastructure delivery in the process.

Below: Minister Jack Chambers answers questions from host Ingrid Miley



This was followed by ACEI's new President, Ciarán McGovern who delivered an impassioned speech on the importance of collective action from members on key issues including skills development and contractual disputes. The keynote speaker was Mr. Bent Flyvbjerg and he provided a tour de force in infrastructure delivery, highlighting both academic research and anecdotal experience on how mass infrastructure can be realised at scale.

Our keynote was followed by our first expert panel with Sean O'Driscoll (Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce), Maria O'Dwyer (Uisce Eireann), Brian Caulfield (TCD), Sean Keyes (Progress Ireland) and David Kelly (Gas Networks Ireland) providing fantastic insight on whether or not infrastructure delivery is actually accelerating.

Below: Panel 1 begin their contribution through Sean' O Driscoll



The next part of the day was the most novel with 7 speakers given 7 minutes only to present their topic and key takeaways. This aesthetically pleasing 7x7 became 8x6 following the addition of another expert speaker but this did nothing to upset the great reception this section received. Participating were:

1. Colette O'Shea (Ramboll)
2. Niall O' Brien (Egis)
3. Graeme Tinney (Griffiths & Armour, an AON Company)
4. John Doyle (DCU)
5. Gemma McCarthy (Mott MacDonald)
6. Lisa Ainsworth
7. Darragh Gaffney (Leyton)
8. Patrick O'Donnell (Onesto)

All that remained were our final two panels. First up were: Ferga Kane (EY), François Basselot (EGIS), Joe Burns (Arup), Richard O'Farrell, (EDC) and Kevin Rudden (Garland) speaking about the future of engineering in Europe and locally in Ireland.

Richard O'Farrell gave an impassioned contribution on the innovative role of SMEs in the marketplace while Joe Burns' comments on collaboration and meeting the demand of the moment, saw him picked up by The Business Post (see media coverage report below).

Conference 2026 Cont...

Below: Richard O'Farrell makes his case to the audience on SMEs



Next up was our final panel with: Jim Oliver (Nicolas O'Dwyer), Maurice Gillen (Jacobs), Tim Murnane (Punch Consulting) and Neasa Fine Kane on leadership within the sector and the need for consulting engineers to step off the sidelines and into the spotlight and how showcasing individual leadership across the country can collectively drive value across the line for all firms.

Wrapping up, Director General Shane Dempsey revealed a new ACEI logo noting that a new era had begun. The new logo pays homage to the traditional pyramid-styled logo of ACEI's founding while remaining sharp and present. We hope you like it!

Below: ACEI's logo evolution



Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland



ACEI

Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland

Cumann Innealtóirí Comhairle na h-Éireann

Pictures from Conference 2026...

Below: Keynote Speaker, Bent Flybjerg



Below: EY's Ferga Kane makes her point



Below: DG Shane Dempsey closes proceedings



Below: Niall O'Brien (EGIS) takes part in the 8x6 section



ACEI make national headlines in May

The Association has had a busy few months, and you might have seen a few familiar faces (and heard some familiar voices!) in the news recently...

Annual Conference Media Coverage

Media titles across the country covered the launch of our annual conference, along with insights from the event itself, including **Irish Times**, **Business Post**, **The Irish Examiner**, **Newstalk** and **Irish Construction**.



9 Radio pieces



5 Print pieces

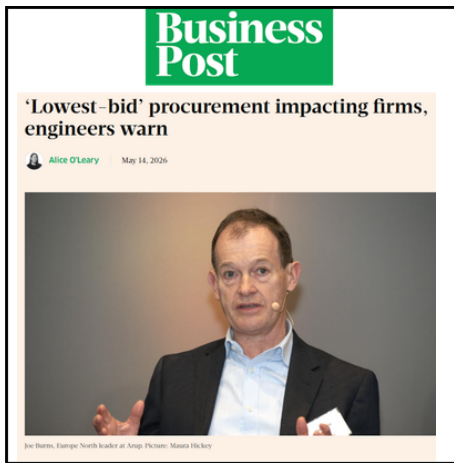


9 Online pieces

Highlights...



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New ACEI Presidential Announcement

As you all know, in May, we welcomed Ciarán McGovern as ACEI President and the news soon hit the Wild Atlantic (air)waves and news outlets across Ireland!



1 Radio piece



4 Online pieces

Highlights...



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Upcoming Events...

Annual Golf Classic

After a brilliant inaugural event last year, it is our great pleasure to announce the 2026 Annual Golf Classic. This year's event will take place in Grange Golf Club, Dublin on October 1st. Further detail will follow in the weeks and months ahead.

Webinars:

- **June 18th: Keystone Showersave** Focusing on waste water heat recovery. Presented by Cameron Loggenberg, Technical Manager at Showersave, and free to attend, this session offers practical insights into Waste Water Heat Recovery Systems for Showers, looking at the range of WWHRS and applying those to the market sectors they service best. For tickets and more information please click [here](#)
- **June 25th: M&E Roadmap.** Presented by Joe Hogan this webinar will focus on the recent guidance note for M+E consulting engineers in establishing the appropriate certification requirements for parties involved in M+E aspects of projects. For tickets and more information please click [here](#).

The Association Grows:

This month we saw further growth in the ACEI's membership. As we grow, so too does our collective voice. In May we welcomed...

RConsEI

- RConsEI - Damien O'Brien, Clifton Scannell Emerson



News within the sector...

Members' Salary Survey

We are pleased to invite you to participate in the [2026 ACEI Talent Benchmarking Survey](#), which we ask member firms to **complete by Friday 26th June**. This annual survey is a key resource for member firms, providing vital insights into compensation trends, workforce composition, and employee benefits across the consulting engineering sector in Ireland.

It is recommended that the HR Manager within each member firm completes the survey on the firm's behalf.

Your participation is essential to the quality and representativeness of the final report.

DEY Information Session and Briefing Webinar: Schools – Sector Capital Plan 2026–2030

The Department of Education and Youth (DEY), in conjunction with the ACEI, RIAI EI and SCSI, will host a free online information session to support the successful delivery of school building projects under the DEY Sectoral Plan 2026–2030.

This opportunity supports the DEY's engagement with the industry on a programmatic level providing updates relating to the NDP pipeline of projects and developments within the DEY in support of the sectoral plan. This will include an overview of the delivery programmes, updates and introduce some further strategic developments, relating to Procurement, BIM and evolving processes, procedures and guidance. This initiative forms part of the ongoing communications and collaboration with the DEY, the Professional Bodies and consultants delivering school building projects. You can register by following the link [here](#).

Thank you for reading!



Association of **Consulting Engineers** of Ireland