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Auditor-General's report highlights significant challenges for Tasmania's ports

A report released today by the Auditor-General, Mr Martin Thompson, found Tasmania's port infrastructure has not been well managed for a long period of time.

The audit found that much of the State's port infrastructure, most notably the wharves, was in poor condition and nearing the end of its working life. Significant investment will be required to maintain existing service capacity.

Mr Thompson said "While there have been high profile failures, such as in relation to preparing berthing infrastructure for the new Spirits, there is a much broader, and potentially far more significant risk of failure in relation to managing the strategic and operational aspects of Tasmania's entire port infrastructure network.".

Mr Thompson also found "a lack of a whole-of-government strategy to coordinate decision across the entire transport network also impacted the ability of stakeholders to make adequately informed decisions."

The audit concluded that the current condition of Tasmania's port infrastructure presents a significant risk for the State. Decision makers need to consider all options for its mitigation, including rationalisation, decommissioning, renewal or replacement.

The audit also identifies that more recent changes at TasPorts have resulted in improvements in the understanding of the challenges they are facing to address the many years of poor management of their infrastructure. In relation to this, Mr Thompson said, "I was pleased to see these improvements and the way in which both TasPorts and Building Tasmania team members engaged with my audit team and have responded positively to my recommendations."

The report made four recommendations, covering Building Tasmania developing a statewide transport strategy and TasPorts establishing a current strategy and funding approach for port infrastructure, establishing a reporting and escalation framework, and maintaining appropriate records of meetings with Shareholding Ministers.

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Click on this link to read the Report. Further information: contact Jonathan Wassell, Deputy Auditor-General, on **(03) 6173 0900**.

Audit Tasmania is an independent agency whose role is to provide independent assurance to Parliament and the community on the performance and accountability of the Tasmanian public sector.