



Media Release

Tasmanian company wins top national award for Basslink connection

State finalist Russell-Smith Electrical and Communications Ltd won the prestigious Gold and Industrial Category Awards at the National Awards of Excellence from peak industry body the National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) on 9 November in Sydney.

Tasmanian contractors, Russell-Smith Electrical and Communications, won the Industrial Category Award and the event also saw them take out the top award on the night as the overall national Gold Award Winner. The awards were presented at a gala dinner held at the Hilton, Sydney, for more than 450 NECA members and industry representatives, including manufacturers and wholesalers, as well as electrical and communications regulators.

The most outstanding electrical and communications design and installation projects carried out by Australian contractors were celebrated. "All of the nominees entered in the 2006 NECA Awards of Excellence have been outstanding. The judges had a difficult job in choosing the winners as they were all of an extremely high standard this year," said Mr Peter Glynn, chief executive officer of NECA.

Mr Glynn said the NECA Awards of Excellence were awarded to those projects that demonstrated innovative use of new technologies, met and/or exceeded the client's expectations and were also commercially profitable for the business.

"These awards provide an opportunity to promote contractors' successful projects to their peers in the electrical and communications industry as well as to the general community," he said. "They also showcase the diversity within the electrotechnology industry."

"This is the twelfth year the NECA Awards of Excellence have been held and they have gone from strength to strength," said Mr Glynn. "They are arguably the most anticipated event in our industry's calendar and highlight the need to continue to support and recognise those who excel in the industry."

An outstanding contribution to the Basslink Connection won the Gold Award – the highest accolade for any electrical or communications contractor – and the Industrial Category Award for contractors, Russell-Smith Electrical and Communications.

The company was established in 1977 by Mac Russell and Neville Smith and now has branches throughout Tasmania. February 2006 saw Russell-Smith become part of a new entity, Pacific Services Group, that has brought together leading electrical and communications contractors in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, currently employing more than 750 personnel.

The Basslink Connection is a massive undertaking, the largest of its type in the world, effectively linking Tasmania to the national energy market. The Russell-Smith contribution included extensive underground cabling as well as a transition station and an important converter station.

One of Russell-Smith's clients on Basslink, Paul Borin, project manager for Prysmian Cables and Systems said, "Russell-Smith demonstrated its capabilities in all areas of the operation, from the complex transport requirements for the cable and its subsequent installation, to providing the high technology electrical expertise involved.

"We were impressed by the Russell-Smith team's ability to embrace the cutting edge technology involved. I also appreciated the cooperation of the team members allocated to the project," he said.

John Dennett, Basslink construction manager for Siemens, said the contractor's personnel worked extremely well in close liaison with German supervisors. "Siemens would be happy to be associated with Russell-Smith in the future, or recommend the company's expertise and abilities to other organisations," he said.

For Gregg Sharman, general manager of Russell-Smith Electrical and Communications, its clients' praise was topped only by receipt of these prestigious Awards. "Being judged by our peers, these awards are a tribute to the accomplishment and proficiency of our people – and to our standing in the industry," he said.

NECA judges said, "An excellent project. Very professional and one of the largest undertaken in Tasmania. The unique project required specialist logistics expertise to resolve complex activities in all areas in order to achieve successful completion in a tight program."

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