



SUPPORTER PROSPECTUS

IRISH SUPPORT AGENCY

64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
NSW 2010

www.irishsupportagency.org.au



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1. ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

The ISA is run by a mature and diversely skilled volunteer committee of 9, with a small team of 3 experienced staff who oversee the day-to-day operations. All are Irish-born.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The Irish Support Agency's Mission is to provide front-line support to anyone in the Irish-Australian community who finds themselves in circumstances of vulnerability or distress. We endeavour to promote mental health & wellbeing and a sense of connection in our community.

3. OUR VISION

The ISA aims to be a safety net for all Irish Australians in NSW who need support, whether that be emotional or financial.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE

The ISA supports anyone of Irish heritage who is living or travelling through NSW and needs assistance. In times of crisis and distress, we also offer support to their family back in Ireland.

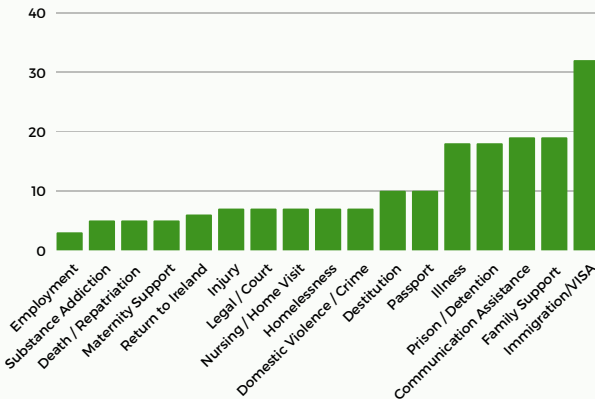
5. SERVICES OFFERED

The ISA offers a broad range of services, delivered by staff and ably supported by vetted volunteers.

1. Client Support Program

- Providing personal and family crisis support, through illness, injury, separation, and other trying times
- Providing housing and accommodation support; such as for those experiencing homelessness, and for those looking to access community housing
- Support with accessing social welfare services and entitlements; such as claiming pensions and compensation
- Visiting people in isolated situations; at their home, in hospital, and in prison
- Support with funeral & repatriation arrangements
- Emotional support in court and advocacy for those seeking legal assistance

CLIENT SUPPORT SNAPSHOT



Jul 2022 - Feb 2023

185

Clients assisted

115

SOLAS Clients Supported

5. SERVICES OFFERED ctd.



2. Seniors Social Inclusion

- ✓ Regular group events in Sydney and Penrith
- ✓ Weekly computer classes
- ✓ Mid-year and Christmas lunches
- ✓ Day trips
- ✓ Befriending service
- ✓ Welfare Calls



3. Community Connection

- ✓ Community information and education events
- ✓ Social Events including the Rambling Irish Walking Group and The Book Club

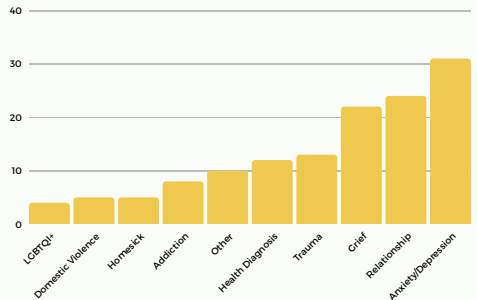


4. Mental Health and Wellbeing

- ✓ Dóchas Health and Wellbeing webinars
- ✓ Mental Health and Wellbeing events including Shoulder to Shoulder and Women for Women

In 2021, the ISA launched SOLAS, a subsidised, culturally sensitive mental health support service. To date, 134 people have accessed SOLAS support. SOLAS provides essential support to those who may not have had previous access to mental health services in NSW.

Due to the ongoing costs associated with this highly beneficial program, we are actively seeking immediate financial supporters for SOLAS.



6. THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Why was the ISA established?

The ISA was established in 1995 to act as a safety net for the Irish community in NSW who, during times of crisis and distress, found themselves far removed from their traditional support network of friends and family. Since its formation, the Agency has grown to meet significant demand, adapting constantly to the changing needs of our community.

Organisational Focus

Bad luck can happen to anyone and sufficient bad luck can be devastating. Health, work, legal or financial issues can feel overwhelming when trying to resolve alone, particularly if unfamiliar with how to navigate Australian systems or community support networks. Whether it is a friendly voice, a helping hand, or something more tangible, the ISA is available to assist in whatever manner we can.

As awareness of the organisation grows, there is an increasing number of Irish Australians who are seeking support from the Agency across all levels of service.

In recent years, we have witnessed a significant increase in the number of clients seeking our help for mental health issues whether that be anxiety/depression, psychoses, or addiction issues. Domestic and family violence has also been to the fore, with this area notably exacerbated by the challenges of the global pandemic.



7. THE ISA DIFFERENCE

The impact of our work is both broad in its nature and far-reaching. Beneficiaries of our care come from right across the entire Irish community here in NSW, whether that be support in an acute illness, homelessness, unemployment, mental health supports including drug, alcohol and gambling addiction services, legal and immigration issues, death and repatriation.

Our Outreach programs seek to support those who find themselves isolated, lonely and vulnerable, our Seniors in need of help with securing aged care packages, those in residential and in nursing homes. We also support those in hospital, detained or in penitential services. The human element of talking to someone from home, who gets it, someone who offers a confidential, compassionate and listening ear cannot be overstated in terms of its impact.

Others who benefit also include anxious family and friends at home in Ireland, who feel helpless as they learn of a loved one suffering at the other side of the world.

The ISA, however, is not just for those experiencing difficulties. With prevention being better than a cure, many of our Outreach Events seek to promote a sense of connection, social inclusion, and health and wellbeing programs with regular information sessions to give people the tools they need to thrive here.

The Irish Support Agency team feel privileged to be able to offer this assistance on behalf of the wider Irish community, none of us knowing when we ourselves may be in need of such support.



8. CLIENT CASE STUDIES

The following case studies present a snapshot of our work.

Details have been changed to protect clients' privacy.

Support during mental ill-health

Background

Hugh, a long-time sufferer of complex psychiatric illnesses, approached us after a run-in with the law. Over the coming months, Hugh had many encounters with addiction and correctional services, acute medical hospitalisations, and multiple involuntary detentions under the Mental Health Act. Each step of the way, he and his family at home were supported by a member of the Irish Support Agency.

How we helped

Over many months, members of the ISA team worked with Hugh to:

- Support him by attending all court proceedings
- Secure access to primary care services with a specialist Mental Health GP
- Liaise with agencies such as Drug and Alcohol Assessment Services, Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Services, Correctional Services, and the Hospital Mental Health Team
- Organise Emergency Accommodation
- Visit and replace essential clothes and toiletries while in hospital
- Provide financial assistance for core outpatient medical expenses
- Provide emotional support by phone when distressed, often many times a day and late into the night
- Liaise with family members back home to appraise and support

Outcomes

The Agency became the sole line of support for Hugh while he awaited court proceedings. Legal matters were eventually resolved and Hugh was free to return to Ireland and access the medical services he so desperately required.

The reluctant prodigal son

Background

The weekend before Christmas, John's mother called us to let us know that he had agreed to come home to his family and they had bought him a flight. John was however very confused, had no money for food, and had gone out to the airport over 30 hours before he was due to board his plane. She didn't think that he'd get on the plane if someone wasn't there to help him through the process and she was further upset because she couldn't reach him by phone. His family had tried to arrange a bed for the night and secure access to food but the distance and lack of communication made it almost impossible to do.

Challenges

John was facing the journey of his life to get back home to Ireland, but mental health issues, a broken phone and no cash made it seem impossible that he would ever get home to his family at all.

How we helped

One of our team, who had met John a few months previously, travelled to the airport and found him in a very disorientated state, hungry, thirsty, and having completely lost track of time. Some food, his first in 24 hours, and a phone call to his mother went a long way to improving the situation. We helped John get through the minefield of the check-in process, baggage allowances and kept an eye on the time so that he knew he was all set to get home for Christmas. It was still a very anxious time for John, as his fears built about the journey and things left undone here. We were able to reassure him that his family would be there to meet him at the other end and that he'd have Christmas at home.

Outcomes

John got home safely to his family for Christmas, where he had the support of his loved-ones and access to the vital services and treatment options he needed. It was clear that the presence of someone to look out for him, to be there with him, to point him in the right direction was fundamental to giving him the confidence to take the next step on his life journey.

9. TESTIMONIALS

This agency came to our aid at a time of crisis following my brother's accident at work in which he sustained serious injuries. The ISA was invaluable help and did great work with government agencies in order to facilitate family to fly from Ireland and be with my brother in intensive care. This wasn't straightforward due to Covid 19 restrictions but the reassurance, help, and assistance from the ISA were invaluable...as well as the aftercare and visits to the hospital. The service is professional, friendly, efficient and ultimately the team is caring, compassionate, and dedicated. I wish them every success they truly deserve.

Joanne Comiskey

After arriving at immigration detention from prison, I had no external support. The Irish Support Agency stepped in and provided information, support, and the resource that was crucial in expediting my return home. If it wasn't for Katerina and Paula at the Irish Support Agency, my experience of immigration detention would have been unbearable, and my return delayed.

I owe a debt of gratitude to everyone associated with the Irish Support Agency, a big thank you from myself and my family. Thank you.

Tony Black

We were put in touch with this wonderful agency when my son developed severe psychosis over the Festive Season. As a parent being the other side of the world during a pandemic, you can only imagine the stress and worry we experienced. I cannot express our gratitude enough to Brigid, Katerina & Paula for helping my son get the medical care he needed, ensuring he had some food and always being on the other side of the phone no matter what time of the day. The work this agency does is incredible! Nothing was above and beyond for anyone of them.

We are still in the process of trying to convince him to return home but through their generosity he is in a much better state of mind than what he was in December and they are ready to step in at any point should we need any further assistance.

Lisa

10. SUPPORTER INVOLVEMENT

What part do supporters play in our vision?

A key strategic aim is to reduce the ISA's heavy reliance on the Emigrant Support Program (ESP) which is awarded annually yet never guaranteed. ESP currently contributes c55% towards our operational costs. It is imperative, therefore, that for continuity planning, **we identify other sources of funding to cover our operational costs.**

It is hoped that by securing annual donations, cause specific funding and event sponsorship from within the Irish community here in NSW, this shortfall can be addressed. These vital funds, provide financial assistance to our most vulnerable clients, who are facing homelessness, struggling to pay rent/utilities, or experiencing food insecurity, etc.

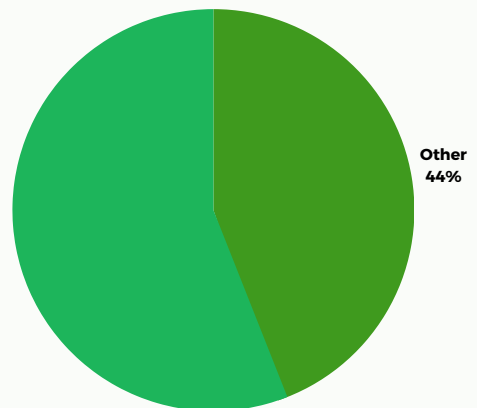
Acknowledging that each Supporter has different needs and requirements from such an arrangement, it is envisaged that benefits associated with each form of support, be tailored towards the specific needs of that organisation. Support without public recognition is also an option if preferred.

ISA Annual Operating Costs

The ISA receives 56% of funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs' Emigrant Support Program.

The ISA must meet this 44% shortfall through other funding streams, including donations, fundraising and membership.

ESP Funding
56%



11. BECOME A SUPPORTER



DONOR

Tax deductible receipt | Certificate of appreciation
Cause specific funding option available
(you choose where your money goes)



EVENT SPONSOR

Event naming rights | Logo placement on event advertising
Support events that matter to you | See the direct impact of
your donation | 2 x complimentary tickets to event



CONTRIBUTOR

Contribute goods, services, venue hire, skills for the success of
ISA events and initiatives
Social media acknowledgement of contribution
Feature in our contributor booklet

For further details, please contact
supporter@irishsupportagency.org.au or call 02 9300 8019.

Please go to www.irishsupportagency.org.au/donate

We operate on a Not-for-Profit basis and have full Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR1) status from the Australian Tax Office. This means that any donations of \$2 or more, are deductible in your next tax return, whether you are an individual, business, or registered charity.

The Irish Support Agency NSW Inc is a not for profit charitable organisation serving the Irish Community in Sydney and New South Wales (NSW) since 1995.

The Irish Support Agency NSW Inc is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission ABN 70 880 566 535.

The Irish Support Agency (ISA) gratefully acknowledges funding from the Irish Government's Emigrant Support Program, which is used to assist anyone of Irish heritage who finds themselves in difficulties while in NSW, through the provision of confidential, sympathetic, and caring support. This funding enables us to significantly impact and support the Irish Community throughout NSW.

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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs