



ISA NEWS AND EVENTS

August 2023

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dear All,

I am delighted to welcome you to the August issue of our newsletter. At the outset, I want to extend a heartfelt and sincere thank you to everyone who donated to our End of Financial Year Appeal this year. Without this ongoing support, it's just not possible for the ISA to do the work we do. These funds go directly to assisting clients in real-life situations on the ground so, on their behalf, I thank you again.

We had some wonderful events this period including our SOLD-OUT Trivia Night & record attendance at our Seniors mid-year lunch, both hosted at the Teas in Bondi Junction. I would like to personally thank Alan and his team for their wonderful hospitality at both events. It was lovely to see so many familiar and new faces at these events as well as our Members' Networking Evening.

I am also immensely proud of our Irish community here in NSW for the support that has been shown to the visiting Irish Women's World Cup team. Seeing the community come out in such numbers to support these talented and professional athletes almost made Sydney feel like we had been transported home. Unfortunately, their journey ended before it should, but they will all go down in history, having inspired the next generation. There were some wonderful events across this period in support of the team and a special thank you to all the community groups here in NSW for your support of the ISA with the Women's World Cup merchandise profits being directed to the ISA.

Finally, Sydney had a solemn but important commemoration of The Great Irish Famine which was held recently at Hyde Park Barracks. I was fortunate to attend and represent the ISA at this moving and very special commemorative event, held not only for those of Irish heritage in Australia but, as the city chosen for the International Famine Commemoration this year, the Irish diaspora all around the world.

For now, I hope each and every one of you is keeping well and warm this winter. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events and that you enjoy reading this edition of our newsletter.



Alan Humphreys, **ISA President**

EOFY APPEAL 2023



On behalf of the staff and the committee of the Irish Support Agency, we would sincerely like to extend our appreciation to everyone who donated to our End of Financial Year Appeal.

With your help, we were able to exceed our target of \$10,000!

This is an incredible result, and one that will enable us to continue our vital work amongst the Irish Australian community.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

COMMITTEE FAREWELL – EOIN RYAN



With a heavy heart, I bid farewell to my role as Vice President of the Irish Support Agency. It's been an exhilarating journey ever since I jumped on board as a volunteer, starting with the Silver Surfers program that provides our seniors with the essential skills for staying connected online. Partnering with Pat was a blast – his tales of adventure were both engaging and inspiring. Though I suspect I left our sessions more knowledgeable than he did!

Before I knew it, I was hooked on the amazing work the ISA does for the Irish community in NSW. I dove deeper by joining the committee and eventually stepped into the role of Vice President. It's been an incredible ride that has benefited both the ISA and me. My tech-savvy skills as a product manager came in handy, streamlining our work with our clients and with our supporters. I even managed to conquer my fear of speaking to large groups, thanks to a few nerve-wracking but rewarding moments representing the ISA.

However, in recent months, I've found it challenging to dedicate the value I believe the ISA deserves. With two young kids under 3, Harry and Freddie, I'm all about making the most of my time with them, while my professional life has been busier than ever. So, it's time to focus my efforts and pass the torch to someone new, ready to be part of this incredible organization.

I can't thank the Irish Support Agency and all of you enough for granting me an extraordinary connection to the Irish community in Sydney. It's a bond we should wear with pride as Irish folks. And don't fret, this isn't a farewell; you'll still see me around, volunteering for the ISA without the bustling committee life. See you soon!

COMMITTEE WELCOME – SIOBHAN BRYANT

Siobhan, originally from Listowel, Co Kerry came to Australia in 1997 on a one year working holiday visa and settled in Sydney. Siobhan is a Registered Nurse who specialised in Neurosurgical /Neuromedical ICU, Anaesthetics and Recovery and has spent the last 15 years in Theatre Management roles.

Siobhan has recently relocated back from New Zealand where she spent 3.5 years working alongside her husband.

She is excited to be back in Sydney and is looking forward to being part of the Irish Support Agency.



SENIORS' MID YEAR LUNCH

On Wednesday 12th July, we had the pleasure of hosting our annual Seniors Mid-Year Lunch in the Tea Gardens Bondi with 46 seniors in attendance!

This is a great opportunity for our senior community to come together and socialise with friends new and old. We also celebrated some birthdays on the day, in particular a 91st birthday for Margaret Walsh. We were treated to a delicious Christmas themed lunch and decorations, and we were extremely well looked after by Alan and the Tea Gardens team, thank you.



TRIVIA AT THE TEAS



Thank you so much to everyone who came out to support us at our Trivia at the Teas event on Wednesday 21st June. We hope you all enjoyed the evening as much as we did!

Congratulations to our worthy first prize winners “The Quizzy Dignams Crazy World”, Eoin King, Aoife O’Connor, Jacinta O’Regan and Paddy McEvoy.

A huge thank you to the Tea Gardens Bondi for being such accommodating hosts and to all of the incredibly generous businesses who donated prizes for the night- Shea’s Bar and Restaurant, Bald Rock Hotel, Taste Ireland, A Wee Taste of

Home, Somatic Ice, Ritz Randwick, Michelle Clarke Hair, Miss Brown Hair and the Tea Gardens.

All of the funds raised through ticket sales and raffle tickets will go directly towards our much-needed client support services so thank you.

FIFA WOMEN’S WORLD CUP

Our Girls in Green took on the Matildas in the FIFA Women’s World Cup on Thursday 20th July.

Thank you to everyone who supported our live screening event, it was great to see so many supporters, of all ages, coming together in a show of solidarity for our girls. Unfortunately, we were narrowly beaten on the night with the girls ultimately missing out on the opportunity to progress to the next stage.



Huge congratulations to Will Nolan, who won our raffle for the signed Women’s Irish Squad 2023 Jersey!

Thank you to everyone who purchased a ticket and thank you to the FAI and the Consulate of Ireland, Sydney for the kind donation of this iconic prize!

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION



We were recently delighted to present Mick Comerford and James Dunne of The Mercantile Hotel - The Rocks , with the ISA's Certificate of Appreciation for their generous and continued support of our organisation.

The Mercantile has been a champion of the ISA and our work for many years, and we deeply value the support of Mick, James and the wider team.

On behalf of the ISA Staff and Committee, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all community members who support our cause.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT – CATHAL LYNCH

Cathal Lynch is a lawyer and registered migration agent at Agile Visas here in Sydney.

Cathal has been an amazing supporter of the Irish Support Agency Outreach Team in the last 12 months.

Cathal and his team have assisted clients in need of migration advice and support in extremely difficult circumstances, in particular a number of parents who have required visa extensions whilst here supporting their children facing health challenges.

Agile Visas have assisted these clients on a pro-bono basis. This generosity has removed the financial concerns for these clients and was one less thing for them to worry about.



When asked *“Why is giving back to the Irish Community important to you?”* Cathal responded,

“Many Irish can, unfortunately, go through difficult times when living in Australia. Being the other side of the world, from home, can make such times all the more difficult – both emotionally and in practical terms. One of the practicalities that Irish often need to address is their visa status. Given the complexities of Australia’s visa system, this can be a cause of

huge added stress for those who are already enduring difficult circumstances. The team at Agile Visas and I have been happy to partner with the ISA and offer assistance, where we can, to people in such scenarios.”

COMMUNITY RADIO



Radio has a special and important place in the hearts and minds of the Irish people as their constant companion. In Ireland, radio sets the agenda each day and acts as a public forum for a diverse range of topics that interest the audience. It's no different here in Australia.

Irish Community radio has remained relevant and ever-present in Sydney owing to the relationship Radio 2RDJ and Ireland Calling have built with our audiences over time. These strong connections combined with dedicated volunteers, a sense of community and commitment, public service, and supplying locally relevant content are cornerstones to our longevity. Building on our core strength of community engagement, while embracing change and adopting the potential offered by digital and social media, Ireland Calling Radio has survived and remains relevant.

A magazine-style 3-hour programme; consisting of news, sport, community announcements, local, national, and international interviews, and of course music, Ireland Calling broadcasts on 88.1fm from Radio2RDJ every Saturday morning between 8.00 am – 11.00 am. It is also live streamed and available on all the usual radio apps like Tune-in Radio and Community Radio. Whilst not the only Irish radio show in Sydney, it is the longest-running - turning the big four-oh (40) this year.

Based in Burwood, Ireland Calling was established by the late Vince Murray who produced and presented the show for 25 years with well-known Dublin man Michael Smullen. Vince was also a founding member of the station. Many well-known community members joined Vince including Michael Lyons, Michael Smullen and Martin Coleman. Following Vince and Michael's retirement, Barry Mack took up the reins, and since January 2012 Tina King-Garde and Catherine Crosse have been producing the show along with Cathy Brazil. Completely self-funded, it enjoys a large listening audience, serving as the voice of the Irish community here.

Ireland Calling remains true to its roots as a medium that connects Irish people and helps them feel part of a shared experience within a community of listeners. The team of volunteer presenters - Tina King-Garde, Catherine Crosse, Cathy Brazil, Helen O'Neill, Pam O'Mahony, Shirley Dalton, Bob Brazil, Tony Hogan, Rory McCrudden, Patrick Quinn, and John Elwell, work on a roster basis educating, informing and entertaining, while giving a voice to the Irish community covering an incredible diversity of issues, ideas, and stories.

If you would like information or have a story to tell, an event to promote, or music you'd like to hear please contact irelandcallingradio@gmail.com or 'like' their Facebook page.

DÓCHAS IS BACK

Our mental health and wellbeing webinar and podcast series returned on Monday 3rd July.
Settled: The Irish Emigrants journey to settlement in Australia.

In this episode we delved into the choices made by Irish emigrants who have decided to establish a permanent residence in Australia.

We were joined by Tina Garde, David Eccles, and Liz Kenny, all of whom have embraced Australia as their new home.



Each person's journey varies in length and complexity, and the decision to settle down in Australia has been easier for some more than for others. However, driven by their personal motivations, they made the deliberate choice to emigrate and build a life in Australia.

As expats, we often struggle with the difficult decision of where to spend the rest of our lives. Some feel a strong emotional tug towards Ireland, calling them back to their roots. Others, though they miss their homeland and loved ones, find that the life they have forged in Australia holds greater appeal.

This episode can be watched back on our Youtube Channel and listened to on Spotify.



On Monday 7th August, we will host Managing Expectations.

Have you ever felt pressure to achieve a certain milestone—a career, marriage, education, or motherhood—by a certain age?

At some point, many of us will have witnessed how society's expectations of what we should have in our lives—and by when—affects us.

So how can we get a better understanding of what it is we actually want in life - things that align with our values versus the expectations that we put on ourselves - through social conditioning

and being told, well this is what you should want, or a sense of inherited legacy from our parents? Join us live on zoom as we delve deep into this with Irish expat and psychotherapist Claire Quigley.

SENIORS DAY OUT – STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE

We had the pleasure of taking our Seniors on an excursion to Coogee, where we were treated to a wonderful storytelling experience by renowned Northern Irish Storyteller Liz Weir.

Liz has the greatest ability to weave stories and yarns that allowed our seniors to recall life back in Ireland and share memories of how storytelling played a key role in the community.



Thank you so much Liz for giving us your time on your jam-packed trip to Australia. Events like these help to keep our community connected and thriving.

LIFETIME OF STORIES



We recently concluded our inaugural "A Lifetime of Stories" initiative, a series of storytelling workshops designed for senior members of the Irish Australian community residing in the Greater Sydney Area.

Our goal was to provide a platform for participants to document their personal life stories, history, and legacies, ultimately creating cherished printed storybooks which were presented to participants. The outcomes of this endeavour have surpassed our expectations, affirming the profound and timeless power of storytelling. By sharing our narratives, we are able to forge enduring social connections and explore the depths of the human experience.

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Salesforce volunteers who worked hand in hand with our seniors, ensuring that their voices were truly heard and acknowledged. This initiative flourished with their wonderful support. Thank you also to the Department of Foreign Affairs' Emigrant Support Programme for kindly supporting this project with a grant.

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. We acknowledge the financial support provided to us by the Emigrant Support Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland which enables us to make a significant difference to the Irish Community in New South Wales every year.



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme
An Roinn Gréifhí Eacnamaíche
Department of Foreign Affairs