



ISA NEWS AND EVENTS

December 2023

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dear All,

It's hard to believe this is our last newsletter for 2023 and I am coming to the end of my first year as President of the Irish Support Agency.

This year has been nothing short of extraordinary for both the ISA and the Irish community in NSW. We've relished the opportunity to reconnect at numerous fantastic events throughout the year. While it's challenging to spotlight every memorable occasion, the Golf Day in February, expertly orchestrated by Paddy McTigue, stands out. My sincere thanks to Paddy and all the fantastic supporters who made the day a resounding success.

From Trivia Nights and Rambling Irish walks to Book clubs, Members & Volunteer evenings, and Mental Health events, our calendar has been brimming with diverse activities. We even gathered for a Women's World Cup screening party. Looking ahead, the planning for next year is already in full swing, promising more opportunities for community spirit and collaboration with our valued partners.

Our Annual Christmas Appeal is now live, offering you the chance to contribute or gift a donation to the Irish Support Agency—a meaningful gesture that supports our vital work.

We do have one more very special event of the year and that is our Seniors Christmas Lunch in Penrith on the 13th of December. Personally for me it's one of my favourite days of the year and I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas with family and friends. I hope that 2024 brings us all a bit more peace in the world, as well as continued happiness & prosperity within the wonderful Irish Community here in NSW.



Alan Humphreys

ISA President

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

As Christmas is fast approaching, we are again appealing to you for any financial assistance you can afford. All money donated to the ISA is used to help those within the Irish Community who are experiencing hardship.

This year we have supported our fellow country people with a range of complex issues including mental health, homelessness, unemployment, illness, and death/burial costs.

Our Board, staff and volunteers continue to work tirelessly providing both practical and financial assistance. However, the need is growing, and the costs associated with supporting our clients is ever increasing as the nature of our support becomes more complex.

If you are in a position to assist, please donate to the ISA Christmas Appeal by bank transfer (ANZ BSB:012 390 Acct No. 311422956) or by calling the office on 93008019 to make a card payment. All financial donations, large or small, will be gratefully accepted. Together we can make a difference.

Please reference all payments with your name and "Christmas Appeal" as all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt for your donation.



SENIORS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Our Annual Seniors' Lunch will take place on Wednesday 13th December at 12pm in Penrith Gaels Club, Kingswood.

A delicious festive lunch awaits, as well as our raffle and merriment.

Cost: \$10 Members/\$15 Non-Members

Please call 02 9300 8019 by Friday 8th December to reserve your space.



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER



On Sunday 5th November, the Irish Support Agency hosted 40 men, of all ages and backgrounds to our third Shoulder to Shoulder event in the Prince Henry Centre, Little Bay, and it was nothing short of a remarkable, inspiring, and deeply moving day.

Thank you to all of our speakers and contributors, Ronan MacDomhnaill, Shane Brennan, Mick Boyle, John Milham, Cathal Fahy, Colm Phibbs, Kieran McLoughlin, Jack Costello and Steven Daniels.

Thank you to those who generously and bravely shared their own experience with mental health, addiction, grief and loss. Your stories have the power to resonate, even just with one person, and offer hope and solace to others who may be facing similar challenges.

There are many ways that men can get together during the week to connect, and we highlighted these great initiatives yesterday, WNOW, How's the Head and Safe Space Summerhill/Coogee.

This event was the work of the ISA's Mental Health and Wellbeing working group, we thank them for their efforts and it was a true honour to host this event.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT – RONAN MACDOMHNAILL

We would like to acknowledge the impressive efforts of Ronan MacDomhnaill, who has played a key role of a number of ISA Mental Health initiatives over the past few years.

Ronan is the founder of Cred, a technology and education company which sets out to inspire others to take care of themselves, others and the planet, every day.

Ronan first became involved with the ISA during the Global Pandemic in 2020. Along with Roisin Trainor and Kevin Clancy, Ronan created The Irish 30 (now Dóchas), a monthly mental health and wellbeing webinar designed to bring informative and inspiring stories to our community.

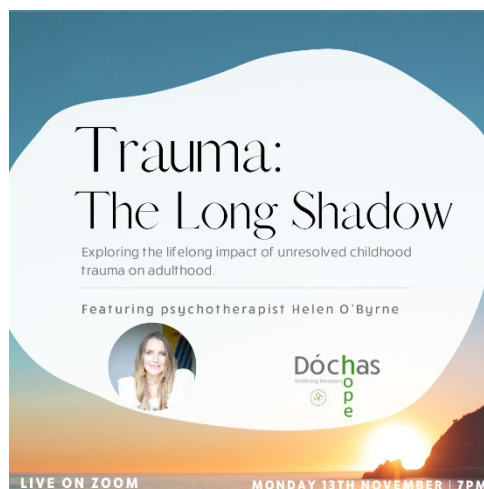
Since then, Ronan has been an instrumental figure in our Shoulder to Shoulder events, bringing with him supreme professionalism and dedication to impactful storytelling. Ronan thrives on giving back and we are incredibly appreciative of his continued support.



DÓCHAS

Our November episode, Trauma, The Long Shadow, looked at unresolved Trauma. For this episode, we were joined by psychotherapist Helen O'Byrne, who has a practice in Neutral Bay and works with clients from many backgrounds and walks of life. Helen has a deep understanding how unresolved trauma can cast a long shadow over our lives.

Helen helped us to understand what trauma actually looks like and what we can begin to do in our adult lives to address this and start to move forward.



For our December episode, and our last of 2023, we hosted Festive Finances. We were joined by Jessica Brady, a leading licensed financial adviser in Australia with over 17 years experience in the Financial Services industry.

We explored why Christmas time induces us to spend more money and how can we set boundaries with ourself and others when it comes to Christmas spending.

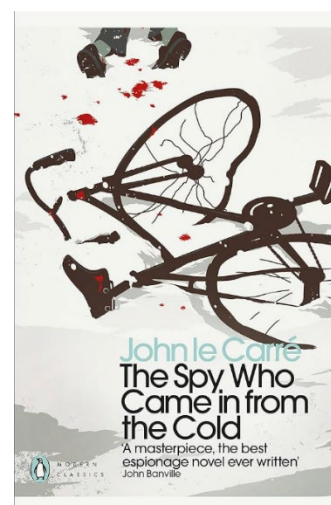
If you have taken a big hit financially in 2023, we looked at how can we look towards our financial future in 2024 without dread and anxiety.

BOOK CLUB

Our book club is held on the last Thursday of each month in the Gaelic Club. Each month, we choose one book to review, and seek to include all genres! It's a great way to meet like-minded people and everyone is welcome.

We are currently reading, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, by John le Carré.

If you would like to attend our next meeting, in person in the Gaelic Club on Thursday 25th January at 7pm, please email Una at project@irishsupportagency.org.au or call 0435 917 260.





NOLLAIG NA MBÁN

Traditionally, in Ireland, January 6th is a special day known as Nollaig na mBán (Women's Christmas) when women are celebrated for their tireless efforts across the festive season.

In the modern day, the tradition is celebrated by acknowledging the role and accomplishments of women in our society.

With that in mind, The Prankqueans, an ensemble of artists inspired by ancient Celtic mythology to celebrate all things female and Irish Australian, are hosting an Open Mic Night at the Gaelic Club, Surry Hills from 6.30pm.

Bring your musical instrument, poem, song or party piece, the Prankqueans want to hear from you and to showcase the incredible talent of Irish mná in Sydney. This promises to be an excellent evening of entertainment and connection so please come along.

Ticket entry is by donation to the ISA only, but please register in advance by calling Una on 0412 324 396.

LIAM O'MAHONY – 56 YEARS AT THE IRISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Liam O'Mahony, West Cork native, recently retired from the INA Board after an impressive 56 years of dedication!

Arriving in Sydney in 1961, Liam has been a stalwart of the INA, Gaelic Club and Irish community in Sydney ever since.

By 1967 Liam was a committee member of the INA. From the vantage point of having had a good deal to do with INA finances – Liam qualified in Australia as an

accountant.

Liam is rightly proud of his and the club's achievements. It is still there, still successfully promoting Irish culture in the 21st century over 100 years after its foundation in 1915. Over the years, the organisation has brought much joy and entertainment to thousands of people.

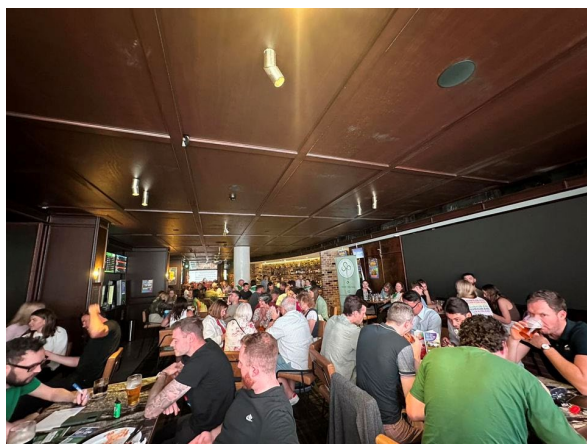
Thank you, Liam, for your years of service to the INA and to the Irish Australian community.

VISA INFORMATION EVENING

Thank you to John McQuaid of Arrive Australia Migration for hosting our annual Visa Information Event on Thursday 23rd November.

This event provided an opportunity for people to ask their pressing immigration and visa questions to a highly experienced migration agent.

Stay tuned for the next event happening in 2024.



TRIVIA AT THE GRAND

Thank you so much to everyone who joined us at our Trivia at the Grand event on Wednesday. We had a full house and are so appreciative of your support.

A huge thank you to the Grand Hotel for being such accommodating hosts and to all of the generous businesses who donated prizes for the night, we are incredibly grateful.

Congratulations to our first place prize winners Vivcraic, second place winners How the grinch stole Quizmas (who narrowly missed out on defending their title) and third place winners Katie's Army.



All of the funds raised through ticket sales go directly towards our much needed client support services.

RAMBLING IRISH



walk provided a great opportunity to see Sydney from a different viewpoint!

On Sunday 12th November, The Rambling Irish ventured across the Harbour Bridge once more, this time to Balls Head Reserve, Waverton.

The walk then took the ramblers to some incredible lookouts, with stunning vistas across Sydney Harbour including Barangaroo, Balmain and Walsh Bay.

Then onto Luna Park and Lavender Bay, this

On Sunday 3rd December, the Rambling Irish held their last walk of 2023!

Undertaking the iconic Coogee to Bondi walk, the Ramblers were gifted a glorious day to traverse this beautiful coastline, spotted with coves, beaches and parkland.

Stopping off at Waverley Cemetery offered a great opportunity to explore the Irish Monument, a commemoration of the struggle for Irish Independence.



The Rambling Irish is an initiative of the Irish Support Agency, and we look forward to seeing you all at our next walk in the New Year, stay tuned.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who make the Rambling Irish possible each month and ensure our walkers are safe and have an enjoyable morning.

RAFFLE WINNER



Huge Congratulations to the winner of our raffle, Tipperary native, Rosie Flanagan.

Rosie has won a \$1000 Travel Voucher. Kindly part-sponsored by Emerald Travel.

Thank you to everyone who purchased a ticket, we really appreciate your support.

ISA BURIAL PLOTS – ROOKWOOD CEMETERY



On Saturday 11th November 2023, the ISA held their Annual Mass of Remembrance in St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney.

This is always a sombre event, but it gives us the opportunity to reflect on our loved ones who we have lost and grieve as a community.

Katerina, our Outreach Worker, takes the flowers each year from the Mass, and lays them on the burial plots that the ISA purchased in 1996 in Rookwood Cemetery. The plots were purchased for those who had no other means of being laid to rest.

To date, 35 people are interred here. In this way, people can be laid to rest with their fellow country people, in peace. Le chéile i gcónaí.

ISA OFFICE OPENING HOURS

Please note, the ISA office will be closed from COB Friday 22nd December and will reopen on Tuesday 2nd January at 9am.

For urgent assistance over this period please call the regular office number 02 9300 8019 and follow the prompts for the out of hours crisis number. This line will be available from 9am - 5pm.

Wishing you all

a very Merry Christmas and a safe and joyful New Year.

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 Gnóthai Eacetracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

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