



ISA NEWS AND EVENTS

April 2022

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

It is with great pleasure that I welcome to the Irish Support Agency's April newsletter.

We have had a busy start to the year, and I have immensely enjoyed seeing the community spirit triumph once again in Sydney.

We had the pleasure of presenting our work to visiting Minister Hildegarde Naughton recently and it further cemented for us all, the importance of our work and the need for greater awareness.

With that in mind, we were delighted to be present at the Sydney St Patrick's Day Festival where we were blown away by the amount of people who came to say hello and drop in for a cup of tea. Luckily, the weather was in our favour, and it was a great day for the Irish Australian community.

We also held our first Shoulder to Shoulder event, which was a huge success. I want to personally thank the men who gave up their Sunday to share their personal journey of mental health issues and resilience. I also want to thank the audience, who listened intently with respect. Fair play to you all and I hope this is the start of more Men's Mental Health awareness in the community.

I would also like to congratulate our Vice President Eoin Ryan and his partner Jen on the arrival of a beautiful baby boy!

I look forward to connecting with you all over the coming months and I wish you all a lovely Easter.

Marian Schaffer, **ISA President**



ST PATRICK'S WEEK

Ministerial visit to the Consulate of Ireland, Sydney



On Monday 14th March, we were honoured to be invited to the Consulate of Ireland, Sydney to present the work of the ISA to visiting Irish Minister of State Hildegard Naughton, H.E. Tim Mawe, Ambassador of Ireland in Australia, and Consul General Rosie Keane.

We always look forward to strengthening our ties with the Consulate and the Government of Ireland, so we were delighted to be given an opportunity to showcase the breadth of our work. This was a lovely start to a great week of festivities!

St Patrick's Day – 17th March



On Thursday 17th March, we were delighted to attend, with our seniors, Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, led by Bishop Terry Brady. Afterwards, we enjoyed our lunch out to celebrate the day that was in it. Some of seniors even took to the Gaelic Club to listen to the trad music and even some dancing!

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Sydney St Patrick's Day Festival – Sunday 20th March



We had a terrific day at the annual Sydney St Patrick's Day Festival on Sunday 20th March. The sun shone brightly as a huge number of people, young and old, flocked to First Fleet Park for a day of Irish celebration.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the hardworking volunteers who generously gave their time to serve almost 500 cups of tea!

Thank you to everyone who stopped by and said hello, there was a great community feel to the day and it was a pleasure meeting faces, new and old.

We would also like to thank the generous sponsors who made the tea tent thrive: The Mercantile Hotel, Paddy the Baker, The Tea Cosy, Our Festive Puds, and Taste Ireland.

By all accounts, the day was a great success, and we must thank the Sydney St Patrick's Day Committee for being so generous and making the day one of the best yet. Well done all!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Ann Lea and Patricia Doherty



Ann and Patricia have become an integral part of our fortnightly Cara Club for Seniors event. Two great friends, they have shown true commitment to assisting us, and they make a really lovely sandwich!

Thank you, Ann and Patricia, for all that you do and we love having you on board with us.

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

Irish Music Abroad – Edel McBride



On Saturday the 2nd of April, Edel McBride and a number of musicians, hosted a fundraising trad session in aid of the Irish Support Agency and Stacey McAuley.

Edel is a talented and accomplished musician and Irish music teacher. She is also involved in the organising of the Comhaltas Sydney Fleadh.

Over \$4000 was raised, an incredible amount of money, so thank you to all who participated and donated.

It was a great evening of music and craic at the Salisbury Hotel in Stanmore, and it was a pleasure meeting you all.

If you are interested in fundraising on behalf of the ISA, please contact Una on 0435 917 260 or email project@irishsupportagency.org.au.



Michael Cusack's Sport and Support Event



Congratulations to Michael Cusack's Health and Wellbeing Committee for their recent Sport & Support Event at the Glebe Hotel. The ISA was offered the opportunity to speak about our work and the range of services on offer.

Ronan MacDomhnaill, of Cred, was also on hand to discuss the importance of resilience when challenges present, with the evening being rounded off by Cora Staunton, the best ladies GAA footballer of our time, who spoke about the physical and mental demands of sport and sharing her own experiences and insights following significant setbacks in her life.



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SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

On Sunday 27th February in Randwick Community Centre, we hosted a Men's Mental Health and Wellbeing Event, Shoulder to Shoulder.

Over 50 men, from all walks of life joined us as we explored mental health issues as they pertain to men.

We had several contributors, who all generously and bravely shared their own experience and story, about mental health and masculinity. We are extremely grateful to you all.



We also learned about a number of key supports and initiatives currently being offered to men in the community. We feel hopeful and energised to see programs like this come to fruition.

This event was the work of the ISA's Mental Health and Wellbeing working group and we were honoured to host it and we look forward to future Shoulder to Shoulder events.

WAVERLEY MONUMENT EASTER COMMEMORATION



On Easter Sunday, 17th of April, there will be a commemoration of the struggle for Irish Independence at The Irish Monument, Waverley Cemetery at 2.30pm. Oration by Senator Deborah O'Neill. All welcome.

DÓCHAS

On the Monday 7th March, in honour of International Women's Day we hosted our second Dóchas webinar of the year.

In the run up to the webinar, we asked the community to submit nominations for the everyday female heroes in their life. It was truly special to read the kind and inspiring words that we had to say about one another, it was very uplifting.



On the night, we were joined by Paralympic Gold Medallist Ellen Keane. Ellen discussed normalising disability in society as well as in sport. She also explored destigmatising the misconceptions people with disabilities face every day.

We were also joined by Julie Mooney - Somers, Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. Originally from Dublin, Julie uses her academic resources to understand and advance the health of socially disadvantaged people and communities. For Julie, International Women's Day is about the learnings and education she can take from other women and encouraging a shared platform amongst all women, especially those who are often underrepresented.

Finally, we welcomed the tenacious Joan Butler. A stalwart of the Irish Australian community here in Sydney. Joan came to Australia over 50 years ago on the 10-pound scheme. She worked as a nurse across the healthcare industry and raised a beautiful family. Her advice for women today, "Do whatever your heart desires."

Monday 4th April – The confidence crisis

For April's Dóchas episode we were joined by Fionnuala Doherty of Inffinite You, a certified life coach who helps people every day with reclaiming their self-worth and Johnny Klusch of Klu Coaching, a registered provisional psychologist and PT.

This was a beautiful chat as we learned the key differences between self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence. We were also provided with simple tools and strategies that we can integrate into our everyday life including boundary setting, self-affirmation, and acceptance.



Our next Dóchas webinar will be on Monday the 2nd May at 7pm.

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THE RAMBLING IRISH



The Rambling Irish is a new, social walking group created by a team of volunteers for the ISA.

They aim to complete 1 walk per month, in and around the Greater Sydney area. It will be a great way to meet new people and to explore parts of this beautiful city. Each walk has been carefully chosen to be accessible for all abilities.

On Sunday the 13th March, we held our walk from Manly Wharf, along to Shelly Beach and onwards to North Head National Park. North Head has sensational views of the city but is also steeped in history as the old Quarantine Station of Sydney.



On Saturday the 2nd of April, some of our ramblers also took part in the Darkness into Light walk in association with the Climb for Charlie initiative in aid of Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association and Pieta House.

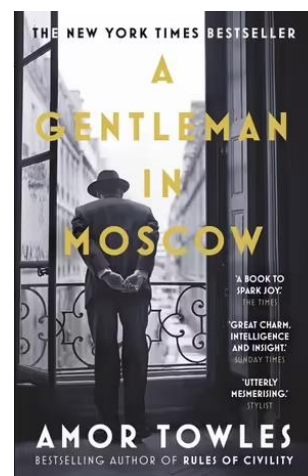
On this day, walkers in Ireland took to the mighty Croagh Patrick, and overall, the initiative has raised over 2 million euro.

BOOK CLUB

Our book club is held on the last Wednesday 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, **A Gentleman in Moscow**, by Amor Towles. If you would like to attend our next meeting, in person in the Gaelic Club on Wednesday the 28th April, please email Una at project@irishsupportagency.org.au or call 02 9300 8019.



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MHFA TRAINING



On Saturday 2nd and 9th April, we held another Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for the Irish Australian community.

Thank you to Roisin Trainor for facilitating this training and to the community participants who are now accredited MHFAiders!

To date, we have subsidised over 100 people of the Irish Australian community to go through this training and we really

believe it's been an invaluable approach to equipping community members with the skills to help someone who they're concerned about.

There will be future training sessions later in the year so keep an eye out for the next one.

Thank you also to Randwick City Council for the grant awarded to cover the venue hire.

SILVER SURFERS

Our Silver Surfers IT classes have now recommenced, and we are enrolling participants for the new term.

The IT classes cover the basics of how to get started with a smart phone, tablet or laptop.

Classes are held from 10am-12pm on a Friday in the Gaelic Club, Surry Hills.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions, please contact Una on 0435 917 260.



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 Gnóthaí Eacetracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

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