



# ISA NEWS AND EVENTS

December 2022

## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dear All,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and you are looking forward to Summer. Safe travels to those who are travelling back to Ireland for an Irish Christmas.

We have had a busy time of late, organising many social, outreach and fundraising events. I would like to thank all who attended and participated, and I hope you were able to form and revive connections.

I am very sad to announce that I will be stepping down from the role of President of the ISA at the AGM on December 12<sup>th</sup> due to family commitments but hope to remain on as a committee member.

The Annual General Meeting of the Irish Support Agency NSW Inc. will be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December in the Green/Ulster Room of the Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills commencing at 6.30pm. All financial members are invited to be present at this meeting when an election of Office Bearers will be held.

I have really enjoyed my time as President. Whilst challenging and busy at times, it has been so rewarding.

I am extremely proud and passionate about the work with do at the ISA. None of this great work would be done without the dedication of our extraordinary staff, Paula, Katerina, Una & Clodagh, and volunteer committee. I cannot thank them enough for their hard work, professionalism, and empathy.

Wishing each and every one of you a happy, restful, and safe Christmas.

Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir.

Marian Schaffer, **ISA President**



## COMMITTEE UPDATES

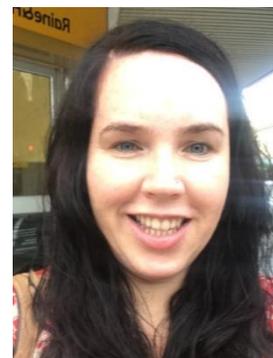
### Farewell – Terence McCaughan



Terence's 15 year contribution cannot be measured in time spent with us as a Committee Member, Vice President or President....not to mention Bus Driver, Sausage Sizzler or Master of Ceremonies! His contribution is more pointedly reflected in the smile that spreads on people's faces as they recall an encounter with him, the human kindness and empathy he brought to many difficult circumstances as well as his wicked sense of humour. We thank him most sincerely for his wonderful support of the Irish Australian community here in NSW and wish him all the very best for the future.

### Welcome – Paula Hannan

Paula, originally from Sligo, has been living in Sydney since 2008. Having come for a year & never left, she has since met her husband, a native west of Ireland man & has started a family. She is a Clinical Nurse Consultant within the Mental Health Services at SVH & has worked in a variety of nursing roles since starting there in 2009. She is passionate about making services easily accessible & readily available to the Irish community.



### Welcome – Alan Earls



Alan, originally from Co. Galway, moved to Australia in 2005. Alan spent over a decade working in the Finance industry but when Covid hit, he moved into the mental health space, using his lived experience to help others to navigate the health system. Alan is passionate about helping people access support for suicidality and set up a peer-led, community drop in Safe Space in 2021.

## IN MEMORIAM – DENIS CARTY

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of our esteemed member and friend, Denis Carty. Denis passed peacefully on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022, aged 87 years. Born in Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon, Denis came to Australia in the 60's and worked very successfully as a Maître D' in some of the well-known hospitality venues including The Gaelic Club. Bringing a great sense of humour with him wherever he went, Denis was a very popular figure within the Irish community here. He will be sadly missed by so many, but especially his wife Alice and daughters Margaret and Marie.

***Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam uasal.***



## SENIORS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

This year, thanks to a generous grant from the Penrith Gaels, we are hosting our fabulous Christmas lunch for Seniors at the Gaels Irish Club in Kingswood at 12pm on **Wednesday 7th December 2022**. A beautiful Christmas-themed lunch awaits as well as our raffle. Cost: \$10 per person for members/\$15 for non-members.

Should you wish to become a member of the Irish Support Agency for only \$11, you will be eligible for the reduced rate on both lunches in the year. Bookings essential, please call Una on 0435 917 260.

## ANNUAL MASS OF REMEMBRANCE



Our **Annual Mass** to commemorate our Irish deceased took place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November at St Mary's Cathedral. Rosie Keane, our Consul General welcomed everyone to the ceremony, led once again by Fr Brendan Purcell. The poignant service was augmented by the participation of so many representatives of the Irish Community Groups and we were honoured with beautiful music by Rebecca Harkin, Kurt Russell and Pelle Söderström.

Katerina, our Outreach Worker, visited the freshly cleaned graves to place the floral displays from our Annual Mass of Remembrance. Since our purchase of the burial plots in St Patrick's lawn in October 1996, 34 people have been interred with their country people.

***Ar dheis Dé go raibh a nanamnacha.***

## PROFILE OF THE MONTH

Geraldine Buttle has been a volunteer with the Irish Support Agency for almost 18 months.

In that time, Geraldine has been instrumental in reinvigorating our Silver Surfers IT Classes.

Geraldine, who works at Salesforce, rallied her Irish colleagues, to participate in the volunteer led program. Geraldine works behind the scenes every week to organise the schedule of volunteers and ensures that our seniors are receiving dedicated and relevant IT assistance.

Geraldine's efforts have enriched the lives of our seniors, and they look forward every fortnight, to learning and discovering the capabilities of IT. Some of our seniors have been able to do a video call for the first time with their family back in Ireland.

Thank you, Geraldine, for all your efforts - we are delighted to have you part of the ISA family.



## SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

On Sunday 30th October, the Irish Support Agency hosted 40 men, from all walks of life to our second Shoulder to Shoulder event. What an inspiring, uplifting and emotional day we had.

Thank you to all of our contributors, Ronan MacDomhnaill, Ciaran Gribbin, Keith Donnelly, Ciaran Davis, Johnny Klusch, Barry Carey, Fergal Hester, and Tom Spillane.

Thank you to those who generously and bravely shared their own experience with mental health, addiction, and mental illness. Your stories have the ability to resonate widely and will help so many other people who may find themselves in a similar situation.



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

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. We would also like to sincerely thank Randwick City Council for generously awarding us a venue hire grant that made this event possible.



## VISA INFORMATION NIGHT

The Irish Support Agency were delighted to welcome John McQuaid of Arrive Australia to a VISA Information evening on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November where we explored a range of the most common visa and immigration queries.

John was able to answer specific, individual questions that enabled attendees to feel more confident about their visa journey moving forward.

We are very grateful to John for taking the time to prepare a detailed presentation and we look forward to hosting another session in the future.

If you missed out on this session, please contact Una on [project@irishsupportagency.org.au](mailto:project@irishsupportagency.org.au) to express your interest in future info evenings.

## CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2022

To reduce the impact on resources, this newsletter is produced and made available online. If you'd like to receive future newsletters via email, please let us know at: [admin@irishsupportagency.com.au](mailto:admin@irishsupportagency.com.au)

The Irish Support Agency NSW Inc, (ISA), provides support and assistance to those members within the Irish community in NSW who have fallen on hard times.

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 online at <https://drct-isa.prod.supporterhub.net/donations/christmasappeal2022>, 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.

## LAUGHTER OUT OF LOCKDOWN

The Irish Support Agency presented 'Laughter out of Lockdown' to a full house on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November in the Gaelic Club, Surry Hills.

Thank you so much to everyone who purchased a ticket, to the unbelievably generous local businesses who sponsored prizes for our raffle and the talented comedians and musicians who provided the entertainment for the night.

We raised \$5000 on the night which will go directly towards our Client Support Services. This means being able to help those who find themselves in difficult and life shattering circumstances. Thank you all so much for your support.



## DÓCHAS



On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November, we were delighted to host our Dóchas webinar, Supporting a loved one through a crisis.

Supporting a loved one through a crisis is one of the most difficult things you'll ever have to do, and so often we tough it out alone. We do our best with the skills and knowledge we have, but often we're fumbling in the dark, unsure of whether we're on the right track, afraid of doing more harm than good.

While most people have some intuition and the best of intentions when it comes to caring for loved ones in crisis, most people could benefit from some upskilling provided by a mental health professional, alongside a group of people going through a similar experience. With that in mind, we were delighted to be joined by Clinical Psychologist Emer McDermott and Sean Keenan. Sean's partner Martine was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2021.

This was a thought provoking and moving conversation and a must listen for everyone to learn about caring for our loved ones.

For our December Dóchas episode, we will be examining our relationship with alcohol.

The festive season is a good time to reflect on our drinking culture and the way we drink.

Alcohol can not only affect our physical health, but it can also significantly affect our mental health and emotional wellbeing. Some people may feel down over Christmas and New Year, and drinking can make this worse.

We will be joined by Joan Purcell, COO of Foundation House and Geraldine Leyden, who has lived experience of alcohol addiction.

Please join us on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm, live on zoom for this incredibly important conversation.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82300141640>

Moving forward, our Dóchas webinars will also be available in podcast format so you can listen anytime, anywhere. You can find us on Spotify or go to this link: <https://spotifyanchor-web.app.link/e/NgCkf8NWkvb>



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We would invite all annual members to renew their membership at their earliest convenience to avoid any delays during the Christmas period. Annual membership is \$11 concession/\$20 non-concession for a 12-month period. We would also like to take the opportunity to welcome new members to the organisation. Membership is a great way to support us, and it also offers you a number of benefits including members only events, reduced ticket prices, and AGM voting rights.

Please go to [www.irishsupportagency.org.au/membership](http://www.irishsupportagency.org.au/membership) to sign up or renew or call Una on 0435 917 260

Annual Membership		Lifetime Membership	
Monthly Newsletter	✓	Monthly Newsletter	✓
Access to the ISA Members Only Facebook group	✓	Access to the ISA Members Only Facebook group	✓
Membership networking evening	✓	Membership networking evening	✓
Support day to day ISA operations	✓	Support day to day ISA operations	✓
20% discount on ISA events	✓	30% discount on ISA events	✓
Annual AGM voting rights	✓	Annual AGM voting rights	✓
		Lifetime members welcome pack	✓
Cost: \$20 Annually \$11 Concession		Cost: \$150 one off payment \$10 Concession	

## COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

### Sydney St Patrick's Day (SSPD) Festival Committee



We were delighted to attend the recent Fundraising Ball for Sydney St Patrick's Day Festival 2023. The evening was a great success and the ISA was thrilled to be the beneficiary of \$3000 towards our Client Support Services raised through the raffle. Many thanks to all who participated, the SSPD Committee for all their hard work, dedication and continued support for our work. We very much look forward to joining the festivities across March 2023.

### IACC and Trinity Alumni Sydney

We were absolutely honoured to be presented with a generous donation of \$2500 today from Barry Corr and Shirley Nolan of the Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce and Eithne McSwiney of Sydney TCD Alumni.

This, as well as all other donations, will go directly towards supporting the most vulnerable people in the Irish Australian community of NSW. Thank you all so much.



## CARA CLUB

Sincere thanks to Gerard of Paddy the Baker who kindly provided a delicious lunch of homemade open sandwiches and pizza slices at our recent Cara Club gathering. Gerard was keen to give back to his loyal community who are big fans of his homemade soda bread in particular.

Our seniors were delighted with the variety that you provided, and you set the bar very high for our future lunches!



## THE RAMBLING IRISH



### The Rambling Irish turns 1!

We have been rambling around the Greater Sydney region for the past 12 months and we have met some wonderful people and experienced fantastic vistas of this beautiful city. On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, we ventured across the Harbour Bridge and started our walk from Taronga Zoo. Along this beautiful stretch of coastline, you have panoramic views of the city and Opera House. We finished up in Chowder Bay and although it was quite wet, we had a wonderful time.

The last walk of 2022 was held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November. We ended the year on a high, taking in the delights of the Harbour Bridge and the lavender hued streets of Kirribilli and Lavender Bay. The Jacaranda trees were in full bloom for us. The Rambling Irish is a great, social walking group which explores various parts of this beautiful city and beyond on a monthly basis.

Thank you to all of our lovely volunteers for making this group a possibility. Join us on our next walk in 2023, see you then.



**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 Gnóthas Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs