



ISA NEWS AND EVENTS

October 2023

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dear All,

I am delighted to welcome you to the October issue of our newsletter.

I'm thrilled to observe that the Irish community here in NSW is making a remarkable recovery post-pandemic. In the past two months, we've been fortunate to witness a resurgence in vibrant community engagement through a diverse array of events, both in-person and online, which you can read about in this edition. These events have been orchestrated by both our own team and our invaluable community partners who have dedicated their efforts to raise essential funds and donations. I'd like to take this opportunity to express my continuous gratitude for the unwavering support of this incredible community.

With Christmas just around the corner, I would like to encourage you to take a moment to explore and support the fantastic lineup of activities we have scheduled leading up to the festive season. One event that holds a special place in my heart is the Seniors Christmas Lunch, which is set to take place on Wednesday, December 13th. I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to spend time with as many of you as possible at this event, as it truly feels like a homecoming for me.

On the sporting front we have gone from one World Cup to another - I am still immensely proud of the Irish Women's World Cup team on their efforts and professionalism - they have firmly handed over the Tricolour to the Irish Men's Rugby team who are again doing Ireland proud on the world stage in sport.

Before I go, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends both here in Australia as well as Ireland on the sad passing of our esteemed past President Michael O'Sullivan. **Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam uasal.**



Alan Humphreys, **ISA President**

COMMITTEE WELCOME – DR. MAIREAD O CONNOR

Originally from Newmarket in Cork, Mairead relocated to Sydney in 2021 to join UNSW Business School as an Assistant Professor in Information Systems. She specialises in Inclusive Design for both existing and emerging technologies.

In her professional role, Mairead collaborates closely with industry partners, including multinational financial and technological organisations in Europe, USA, and Asia. She is also actively involved with Australian social enterprises and NGOs, where her experience in securing grants has extended to both Ireland and Australia.



Beyond her academic and professional commitments, Mairead maintains a lifelong connection to the GAA and currently enjoys playing AFLW with a local Sydney club.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT – EVA MILLINGTON



We take immense pride in shining the spotlight on Eva Millington, a dedicated and long-standing volunteer within the Irish Support Agency.

We had the privilege of bestowing upon Eva our Certificate of Appreciation, a gesture that couldn't have been more fitting for such a deserving individual.

Eva, originally from Co. Monaghan, embarked on her journey to Australia in July 1973, marking an incredible 50-year anniversary of her emigration. Eva has been an active and integral part of the Irish Community in NSW, contributing her time and expertise to organisations such as the GIFCC, the Irish Language School Sydney, and previously making valuable contributions to the beloved Irish radio station - Ireland Calling.

Eva consistently lends her support to numerous initiatives of the ISA, displaying unwavering commitment to our mission. Her regular involvement includes offering assistance in various service areas and extending her compassionate care through hospital and nursing home visits.

Eva, your dedication is truly commendable, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your contributions.

IN MEMORIAM – MICHAEL O’SULLIVAN



It is with deep regret we advise of the passing of Michael O’Sullivan from Carrigadrohid / Ballincollig Co Cork, latterly of Emu Plains and long-time member and supporter of the ISA.

Michael became a member of the Irish Australian Welfare Bureau, (IAWB) the predecessor to the Irish Support Agency in 1998, a few short years after its foundation. The following year he was elected to the committee and over the next 13 years helped guide the organisation in its work and development. He served two stints as Chairman, from 1999 to 2001 and again from 2005 to 2008 and in his final year, served as Treasurer. In 2005 Michael represented the IAWB at the EAN Conference in Dublin, meeting DFA officials and securing much increased funding for all the Irish

welfare agencies in Australia.

He and his wife Paula have been instrumental to the running of the Seniors group, Tír na nÓg in Penrith Gaels and always had a warm welcome for all. He was a source of great advice over recent years, keen to offer congratulations on a job well done and a meticulous scrutineer of our financial wellbeing.

During Michael’s tenure at the IAWB, he became a cherished mentor to many, including myself, offering guidance and support that extended well beyond the boundaries of the organisation.

Michael’s mentorship was characterised by his unique blend of wisdom, gentleness, and firmness. He was not only a sounding board for those seeking guidance but a steadfast advocate for the organisation itself. He played an instrumental role in critical decisions, such as the pivotal name change of the Irish Support Agency (ISA) in 2015, to name just one.

However, if there was one thing that Michael was unequivocal about, it was his passionate and often controversial stance that Cork was, without a doubt, the best county in all of Ireland!

*This unwavering pride and love for his homeland became a characteristic that endeared him to all who knew him. Michael’s legacy will continue to live on through the countless lives he touched, the enduring contributions he made to the IAWB, and the fond memories shared with family and friends. His warm smile, gentle guidance, and the occasional spirited debate about Cork will be dearly missed by us all. **Terence McCaughan, President 2009-2012***

“When elected President, Michael pulled me to the side to offer his congratulations and to give me a few words of his wisdom. He reminded me of the honour it was to serve the Irish Community in NSW and to never forget that there were people in the Irish community that needed more help than I probably ever realised. He told me to hold my own and be the voice of the Irish in NSW when needed but also to have an empathic ear and heart for those who were unfortunate enough to come to our door.” **Donna McKiernan President 2018-21**

“Michael was a true gentleman, very supportive of committee members that served with him which continued after his tenure. His attention to detail and the welfare of the clients was utmost in his approach to the positions he held with the IAWB and ISA. Michael travelled long distances to attend all the meetings, which was a true reflection on how seriously he took his role on the committee. He will be sadly missed.” **Liz Kenny President 2012-15**

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Paula and all the family. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

ANNUAL MASS OF REMEMBRANCE

The Irish Support Agency invites you, your family, and friends to join us for our Annual Mass of Remembrance on Saturday 4th November, when we call to mind our loved ones who have passed away. At our annual Mass, we gather in a special way to commemorate the deceased members of the Irish and Irish Australian communities.

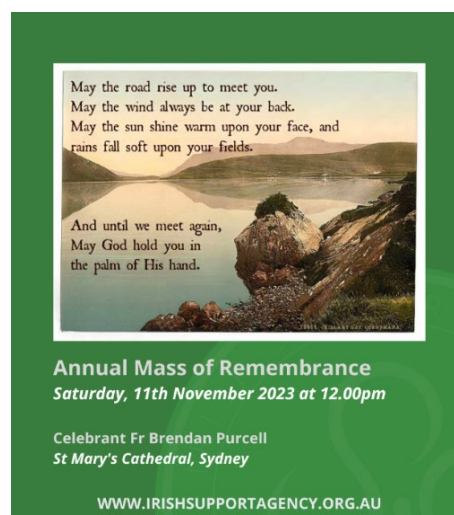
The death of someone you love is always traumatic. Their passing leaves a void in your life and home. We turn to family and friends to console us in our grieving.

As a community, we will gather to support each other and turn to God in prayer for our deceased loved ones at our Annual Remembrance Mass.

If you have lost someone throughout the last year and would like their name mentioned during the Mass, please contact us at admin@irishsupportagency.org.au before Friday 10th November 2023 including the name of the deceased.

SENIORS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Date Claimer – Our Seniors Christmas Lunch will take place in Penrith Gaels Irish Club on Wednesday 13th December. More details will be released in due course.



TRIVIA AT THE GRAND



A fundraising trivia night in aid of the Irish Support Agency.

Join us at The Grand Hotel, Bondi Junction on Wednesday 22nd November at 7pm for a traditional tráth na gceist.

Our fabulous ISA Quizmaster Brigid will be asking the tough questions on the night, plus we have some fabulous prizes up for grabs.

Get tickets here- [https://drct-](https://drct-isa.prod.supporterhub.net/events/triviaatthegrand2023)

[isa.prod.supporterhub.net/events/triviaatthegrand2023](https://drct-isa.prod.supporterhub.net/events/triviaatthegrand2023)

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING – THE TREEHOUSE HOTEL

On Saturday 23rd September, The Treehouse Hotel in North Sydney held “A Spectacular Feast”, a fundraising, Irish themed dinner in aid of the Irish Support Agency.

The Treehouse hotel, owned by Andrew Utiger and Dave Maisey, and spearheaded by Waterford man Colm O’Neill also held an Irish themed, family friendly afternoon to showcase some beautiful Irish produce.



We are immensely grateful to The Treehouse for their warm hospitality and their generous donation of \$5000 to the ISA. Their commitment to supporting our cause has truly made a significant impact.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Mick McDonnell of DEM Signage and Karen Murphy, President of Sydney St Patrick’s Day Festival for generously donating some auction items on the night which raised an incredible \$1700!

A huge thanks to Rebecca Harkin and her superb band for providing the most beautiful musical backdrop for the evening, and to Shay Stanley, The Irish Butcher for donating some of his delicious meats to be enjoyed.

Last but certainly not least, we extend our thanks to all those who attended, purchased tickets, and made donations. Your support is of paramount importance to us. Without the unwavering support of the Irish community, we would not be able to carry out the vital work that defines our mission.

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Shoulder to Shoulder, our Men's Mental Health and Wellbeing Event returns on Sunday, 5th November in the Prince Henry Centre, Little Bay.

After the huge success and incredible feedback that we received from our events in 2022, we are back with thought-provoking stories from men in our community. Shoulder to Shoulder aims to provide a safe space where men are asked to listen and choose to share if they wish. There is no pressure and no judgement; just a feel-good and educational environment to dip your toe into!



This event will feature lived experience stories of resilience in the face of extremely difficult challenges. We will also have a number of professional speakers who will share their expertise in fostering healthy relationships, trauma and forming social connections to reduce isolation. Tickets are only \$15 and include lunch. To book your spot, call Una on 0412 324 396.

Register here - <https://drct-isa.prod.supporterhub.net/events/shouldertoshoolder2023>

THE RAMBLING IRISH



On Sunday 8th October, The Rambling Irish returned after a well-deserved Winter break!

The Ramblers explored the Cooks River in Sydney's Southwest. An unexplored area for many of us, the walk provided plenty of beautiful scenery and parklands.

A lovely day out for all and great to see so many new faces, young and not quite so young!

Our next walk will take place on Sunday 12th November, and we will head across the bridge again to Balls Head Reserve in Waverton. To reserve your spot call Una on 0412 324 396 or register here - <https://drct-isa.prod.supporterhub.net/events/ramblingirishballshead>

RAFFLE



Last minute trip home for Christmas? Or perhaps you could give the gift of travel to a loved one?

Enter our raffle to win a \$1000 travel voucher, kindly part-sponsored by our friends at Emerald Travel. Tickets are only \$10 each.

Tickets are on sale online, and in person at our Trivia at the Grand Event on Wednesday 22nd

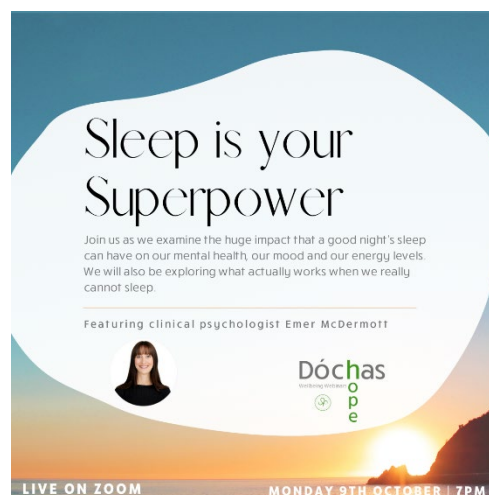
November. The winner will be drawn on Thursday 23rd November.

ENTER HERE - <https://drct-isa.prod.supporterhub.net/raffles/travelvoucherraffle>

DÓCHAS

Our October episode, Sleep is your Superpower looked at the huge impact sleep can have on our physical and mental health. We were joined by clinical psychologist Emer McDermott, who is very passionate about educating the community about the importance of sleep.

We explored the spectrum of sleeplessness and Emer gave us practical solutions to assist us in managing our sleeplessness at home. She also outlined when it is appropriate to seek professional help.



On Monday 13th November, we will be joined by Psychotherapist Helen O'Byrne.

Helen, who has a practice in Neutral Bay, works with clients from many backgrounds and walks of life, and has a deep understanding how unresolved childhood trauma can cast a long shadow over our adult lives.

Trauma can come in many forms, and this episode will aim to explore how our childhood experiences can have a profound and enduring impact on our wellbeing.

Helen will help us to understand what we can begin to do in our adult lives to address this and start to move forward. A very important episode, please tune in.

IRELAND FUNDS GLOBAL 5K

Congratulations to everyone who participated in The Ireland Funds Australia Young Leaders Global 5K on Saturday 23rd September.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the Young Leaders team, who put a huge amount of effort into the seamless planning and organisation of this incredibly successful event.



Shout out to the volunteers who gave up their morning to keep the runners safe, well fed and hydrated.

The Irish Support Agency is so appreciative to have been chosen as one of the charity beneficiaries this year and the team have raised an impressive \$18,000 and counting, which will be allocated across their 4 chosen charities this year.

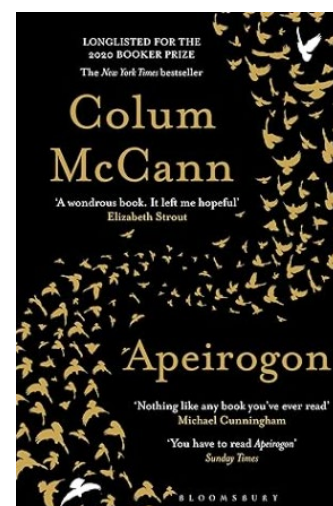
Mairead and Siobhan, the ISA's most recent committee members enjoying the day and supporting the Ireland Funds.

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, *Apeirogon*, by acclaimed Irish writer Colum McCann.

If you would like to attend our next meeting, in person in the Gaelic Club on Thursday 26th October at 7pm, please email Una at project@irishsupportagency.org.au or call 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 Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

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