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Ambasáid na hÉireann Canberra
Embassy of Ireland Canberra



Ambassador's Welcome:

A Chairde Gael is Cairde na nGael ar fud na hAstráile

Fáilte romhat go eagrán eile do Nuachtlitir na hAmbasáide. Tá súil agam gur bhain sibh taitneamh is tairbhe as Lá na Féile Pádraig 2021 in ainneoin COVID-19. Bhuaile an paidéim Éire go trom ach tá dul chun cinn maith á dhéanamh againn le dul i ngleic leis an dushlán. Tá buíochas ar leith ag dul dóibh sin ar fad atá ag seasamh sa 'Bhearna Bhaoil' idir lucht leighis is cúramóirí eile túsline.

Dear Friends

This year our St Patrick's Day celebrations were restrained, in line with the sombre and serious situation that so many communities across the globe are facing due to the challenges of COVID-19. Ireland has been heavily impacted by COVID - 19. I would ask you to share a positive thought for our families and friends at home. Let me take this opportunity to most sincerely thank the brave women and men who staff the frontlines of the fight against the pandemic. Go raibh míle maith agaibh is nár laga sibh.

We still have much to celebrate and to be thankful for. While Australia has suffered challenges from COVID-19 some degree of normality has been possible and some sport and other communal activities have continued.

Even though we were not able to gather for our customary get togethers, parades and festivals, we had the time to reflect on the richness of our culture, shared by so many people across Australia and the globe. History has proven that we Irish, in Australia or wherever we are in the world, are resilient and resourceful people.

Enjoy this newsletter!

Breandán Ó Caollaí
Ambassador



Move over St Patrick!

'Lá Fhéile Bríde - St Brigid's Day'

This year the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, launched an open call to colleagues everywhere to participate in a global initiative to celebrate and acknowledge the creativity and achievements of Irish women, in the arts, science, business, politics and in countless other fields. St Brigid's Day has captured the imagination of Irish communities around the world with events taking place in 35 different cities.

Australia's Irish communities took up this call and the Embassy funded and attended a number of St Brigid's Day events.

The Ambassador and Carmel attended the St Brigid's Day celebration of the Irish Club, Canberra. The programme consisted of talks on five significant Irish women, a traditional music session and an Irish dancing display.

"Gradam Gaeilge Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann" was presented to Angela Devlin wife of the late Barney Devlin, a dedicated Irish language activist.

Sill in Canberra, the Ambassador and Carmel were guests at the St Brigid's celebration of Cairde na hÉireann/Friends of Ireland. The event consisted of two guest speakers, Sr Jane Keogh and Dr Jean O'Riordan who spoke about strong Irish women role models and remembered the ethos of St Brigid looking after those in need especially the refugees.

There was an impressive session of traditional music, singers in Irish and English and an excellent Irish dancing display. Both the Ambassador and DHOM Eamonn Robinson were called upon to sing a few tunes!

A novel element of the event was a St Brigid's cross making workshop.

In Melbourne, the Ambassador and Carmel attended the celebration of Brigidfest. The lunch was addressed by Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP, Victorian Government Minister.

In Brisbane, Harriet Sexton Morel attended the Queensland Irish Association's Thirty Second St Brigid's Day Dinner. Fiona Hodge of Orange Sky was the key note speaker.

Looking forward to Lá Fhéile Bríde next year.





Visit by Governor-General of Australia and Mrs Hurley to the Embassy

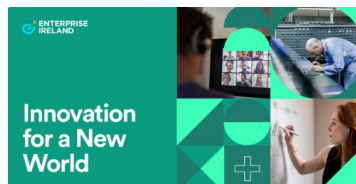
The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) and Mrs Lynda Hurley.

Ambassador Ó Caollaí and Carmel were honoured to host their Excellencies to lunch at the Embassy Residence on 18 February. The Governor-General is proud of his Irish heritage which has been traced to Ballinspittle, County Cork. In the course of the lunch we discovered that Mrs Hurley also has family connections to Belfast! The Governor-General expressed particular regret at the impact of COVID-19 on Ireland.

On the steps of the Embassy upon departure Mrs Hurley sang a lovely rendition of "When Irish Eyes are Smiling".

Pawel Strzelecki, Forgotten Polish Hero of An Gorta Mór

Ambassador Ó Caollaí was invited by the festival organisers and the Polish Ambassador, to open an exhibition commemorating the work of Pawel Strzelecki, a celebrated explorer. Strzelecki later played a key role in saving thousands of Irish children from starvation during An Gorta Mór. The event in Tumburumba, New South Wales, was preceded by a plaque unveiling and was attended by members of the Polish community, a number of State and local politicians and members of the public. The exhibition was originally produced by the Polish Embassy Dublin and opened by Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D Higgins in Dublin in 2019. (Then Lord Mayor of Dublin and Mayor of Poznan unveiled a plaque to Strzelecki in Sackville Place, Dublin in 2015)



March was a busy month for Embassy engagement with Enterprise Ireland EI.

The Ambassador was delighted to participate in a number of engaging and worthwhile advisory and promotional events

- EI Irish Women in Business
- EI Mentor Launch
- EI Energy Advisory Panel
- EI Ireland Revisited
- EI Melbourne Advisory Panel
- EI Healthcare panel



Presentation to Mr Martin O'Connor

In Melbourne on 12 April, 2021 Ambassador Ó Caollaí had the honour on behalf of Minister Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, of presenting Mr Martin O'Connor with Irish defence medals on behalf of his father Mr Thomas O'Connor (RIP).



Martin was presented with An Bonn Jadotville medal which honours the men of "A" Company, 35th Infantry Battalion in recognition of their courageous actions during the siege at Jadotville in September 1961 during the UN Peacekeeping operation in the Congo as well as being presented with The Unit Citation to A Company and the UN Peacekeeping medal.



The Ambassador read out a personal message from Minister Coveney T.D. This was a proud and emotional acknowledgement to Martin and his family.



A spotlight on Perth

Since 1997, the Claddagh Association has been a family away from home, supporting Irish people in Western Australia (WA) through the ups and downs of life. As our vice Chairperson, Peter McKenna says, "If you have a network, things are much easier to manage but there are a lot of families here who don't have that in the way that they do back home in Ireland. What I realised is that I could make a difference to other people's well-being at the time of a crisis situation".

Much of Claddagh's work is carried out by our dedicated, hardworking volunteers. Their strong commitment to Claddagh's work is inspired by an understanding of its importance. Sometimes that understanding comes from personal experience as was the case for our committee member Stephanie Upton.

"I volunteer at the Claddagh Association because in my time of need there were a group of volunteers who stepped in and helped me. My dad, Ned, passed away quite suddenly on a holiday to Perth ... and we were just like, "What do we do?". They held our hands all the way but then when it was time to step back, they stepped back."

As well as providing help and support to members of the Irish community who find themselves in difficult circumstances, the Claddagh Association also supports senior members of the Irish community and those who may be lonely and isolated. Patricia Bratton, Claddagh Treasurer (and herself a respected senior in the Irish community in WA) leads our Seniors Subcommittee. Since COVID-19 restrictions were eased in WA our Seniors events have been more popular than ever, often requiring the group to host repeat events to cater for the increased demand. This year the Seniors Subcommittee have hired a cinema for a film showing, gathered for a meal in a popular Irish venue and shared a celebratory St Patrick's Day brunch. Members of the Seniors group consistently give great feedback showing how important the group is to them, saying things like, 'We love the way you look after us' and 'Everything is so well organised and safe. It is better than any other group'

The Claddagh Association also aim to promote the well-being and development of the Irish community. We share resources and expertise with other Irish community organisations to develop the strength of our networks and build a resilient Irish community in WA. We also seek opportunities to engage and work with other Irish community organisations in welfare work and for fundraising. In March the Irish Golf Club hosted a St Patrick's Day fundraising tournament which was a great success. Twenty-seven Irish businesses sponsored the event and nearly 100 golfers and supporters turned out on the day. This community support is vital to the work of Claddagh.

Claddagh's final aim is to celebrate and preserve Irish heritage. Last year the Government of Ireland's COVID-19 Response Fund for Irish Communities Abroad part funded an oral history project with Irish Seniors in WA. Claddagh Coordinator Anne Wayne trained Claddagh volunteers and matched them with Seniors to collect the oral history of their migration journey to WA. The process enabled relationship building during COVID-19, strengthened feelings of connection to Ireland and contributed to identity building in the Irish community in WA. With support from the Australian Irish Heritage Association, we published edited excerpts from the Seniors interviews in a book titled: From Home to Home: Oral Histories of Irish Seniors in Western Australia (available in digital format here: <https://claddagh.org.au/claddagh-oral-history-project/>). The book was launched by Honorary Irish Consul Marty Kavanagh at a celebration at the WA Maritime Museum overlooking the quay where many of the interviewees had first set foot in Australia. The complete archive of oral history interviews is a valuable historical record which was lodged at the State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) and will be housed in the SLWA Migration Voices Archive which is part of the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Programme.

The Claddagh Association gratefully acknowledges the support of The Government of Ireland's Emigrant Support Programme, The Embassy of Ireland, Canberra and The Consulate of Ireland, Western Australia. If you would like to know more about what we do or how you can support our work please contact Claddagh Coordinator, Anne Wayne, admin@claddagh.org.au/0892499213.



We will 'Spotlight' a different support agency in each issue!

The Lansdowne Club annual St Patrick's Day (SPD) lunch

On 12 March Ambassador Ó Caollaí and Carmel were guests of the Lansdowne Club annual St Patrick's Day (SPD) lunch. The event is modestly billed as the largest SPD event in the world! This year attendance was limited to 1,164 attendees due to Covid-19.

The event was very well attended by State and Federal politicians as well as business representatives. Politicians present included the leader of the Federal opposition, Labor Party leader Anthony Albanese MP, Senator Hollie Hughes (representing PM Morrison), Hon Anthony Roberts (representing NSW Premier), the Leader of the NSW Opposition, Ms Jodie McKay, MP and Senator Deborah O'Neill.

This event was an invaluable networking opportunity with business, political, Irish community and cultural contacts present. The Ambassador was one of the seven speakers at this event. He expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the attendees to increase trade between Ireland and Australia.

He also spoke about COVID-19, lauded the frontline workers and touched on the negative impact of COVID-19 on Ireland.

He invited the guests to join him in the singing of Ireland's Call in solidarity with people of Ireland particularly challenged by COVID-19.



St Patrick's Day Dinner hosted by Mayor of Orange

The Ambassador and Carmel were guests of the Mayor of Orange, Reg Kidd at a dinner to celebrate St Patrick's Day and to commemorate James Dalton, a prominent historical Limerickman in the region, who build Duntryleague House a magnificent mansion and developed its economy.

Orange is a prosperous regional town and a leader in clean energy and water recycling in New South Wales.

St Patrick's Day, Melbourne

The Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce (IACC)'s Corporate Lunch

As part of St Patrick's Day celebrations around Australia this year Harriet Sexton Morel from the Embassy attended the Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce (IACC)'s Corporate Lunch in Melbourne.

The IACC St Patrick's lunch was attended by 1,000 people, the largest conference type event to take place in Melbourne, since the outbreak of COVID-19. Qatar Airways sponsored two business class return tickets to Ireland as the main raffle prize. Attendees including Victorian Minister Gabriel Williams, MP the Hon Michael O'Brien, MP leader of the opposition in the Victorian Parliament, many significant business leaders as well as representatives of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and the European Australia Business Council.

During her visit to Melbourne, Harriet met with the newly elected Celtic Club committee, including Clare Murphy, and its new President, Dr Patrick McGorry, Elizabeth Moore, President of the ESP funded IASRB, and Christina Moloughney of Emerald Travel to get an update on the assistance provided to Irish citizens during COVID.



A NAME FOR HERSELF

A rebel Irish countess fights for women & freedom

A powerful new play based on a true story
Writer Meg McNena, Director Lynda Fleming

Renaissance Theatre

826 High St, East Kew
Sat 13 Mar 1.30 & 6.30 pm

Tickets: trybooking.com/BNWEE
or phone book: 0412 320 480

Adults \$39.50
Concession \$29

Programs can be downloaded at:
<https://namedforherself.wixsite.com/play>
COVID safe rules on seating, masks (BYO),
entry/exit, record keeping & health guidelines.

With the kind support of:
City of Boroondara Annual Grant
Irish Embassy of Australia, Canberra
Melbourne Comhaltas



A Name for Herself

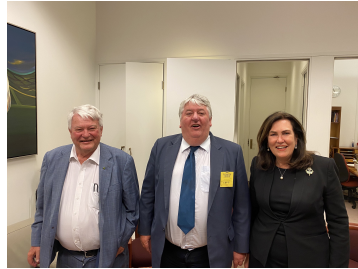
On Saturday 13 March 2021 Harriet Sexton Morel attended and spoke at a play, 'A Name for Herself - Constance Markievicz' supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs. The play provided a snapshot of Constance's life, her role and subsequent imprisonment in the aftermath of the Easter Rising. It depicted the role played by Irish women more broadly in the suffragette movement. Constance Markievicz was the first woman elected to the British Parliament in 1918. She never took her seat as she was an Irish republican. The performance linked in very well with International Women's Day celebrated on 8 March.

St Patrick's Day, Canberra

The Canberra Irish Club's St Patrick's Festival

Ambassador Ó Caollaí and Carmel were guests at the launch of the Canberra Irish Club's St Patrick's festival. The Ambassador in his address praised the Club for an exciting St Patrick's Day programme in Covid times.

Both the Deputy Head of Mission, Eamonn Robinson and Harriet Sexton Morel visited the Canberra Irish Club on 17 March to celebrate St Patrick's Day. There was live music and dancing performances throughout the day and a great crowd attended and enjoyed the festivities.



Federal Parliament, Canberra

St Patrick's Day get together with Australian Irish Parliamentary Friendship Group

On 15 March the Deputy Head of Mission, Eamonn Robinson attended a St Patrick's Day get together in the Australian Parliament hosted by the Irish-Australian Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The lively event was well attended by Members of the Parliament, including co-chair Ken O'Dowd MP, Senators and their staff. Senator Deborah O'Neill's son Noah, an accomplished musician and singer entertained the gathering for the evening with Irish songs and music.

St Patrick's Day, Brisbane

Brisbane Irish Festival Charity Ball

Deputy Head of Mission (DHOM), Eamonn Robinson attended the Irish Australian Support Association of Queensland's (IASAQ) Charity Ball in the Victoria Park Golf Complex in Brisbane on 6 March. The Charity Ball is a very popular event with 350 people in attendance. There were three speakers at the event Nicola Holly, President, and Paddy Farrelly, Co-ordinator of IASAQ and the DHOM on behalf of the Embassy.



The annual St Patrick's Day lunch, Queensland Branch of the Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce, Brisbane

The annual St Patrick's Day lunch organised by the Queensland Branch of the Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce took place in Brisbane on 12 March 2021. There were approximately one hundred and twenty attendees at the lunch and the principal speakers were Councillor Ryan Murphy, the Chair of Public and Active Transport Committee, Brisbane City Council, a regional representative of Qatar Airways (who provided two business class return tickets to Ireland as the main raffle prize) and the Deputy Head of Mission, Eamonn Robinson.

The Queensland Irish Association (QIA), Brisbane

The Ambassador and Carmel were guests of the Queensland Irish Association (QIA) President Jeffrey Spender QC, at the St Patrick's Dinner. The event was attended by Governor de Jersey, Premier Paluszczuk, other elected officials, the Supreme Court Justice, Martin Daubney and members of the legal profession and Irish community representatives. Amongst the speakers at the dinner was award winning journalist Kerry O'Brien.



St Patrick's Day Mass, Brisbane

On 17 March, the Ambassador and Carmel attended the St Patrick's Day Mass concelebrated by Archbishop Mark Coleridge. The congregation joined in the singing of beautiful Irish hymns and were enthralled with an inspiring solo rendition of 'Ag Críost an Síol'.



Ambassador and Carmel then had a morning tea with the Archbishop and Sligoman Fr Gerard McMorrow. The Archbishop acknowledged the strong Irish origins of his archdiocese and thanked the Irish community for their ongoing contribution.

Those attending also included the QIA President and other leaders of the Irish community from the Brisbane St Patrick's Parade committee and the Irish Australian Support Agency in Queensland.



All events were hosted in compliance with Covid-Safe guidelines

**St Patrick' Day Parade, Toowoomba,
Sunday 14 March, 2021**

The Embassy was delighted to sponsor the Darling Downs Irish Club's St Patrick's Day Parade. President of the Darling Downs Irish Club, Tomas Guerin said this year's parade was larger than previous years with more floats and performers taking part, including the Toowoomba and the Southern Downs Town Criers and the Caledonian Pipe Band to name a few.

Congratulations to all involved in a successful St Patrick's Day Parade.



St Patrick's Day, Adelaide

St Patricks' Day was hosted by the Adelaide Irish Club on the Village Green at the Adelaide Oval. It was a wonderful celebration and festivities commenced at noon and continued till late in the afternoon. Attendees were treated to the very best of Irish dancing, singers and traditional food and drink.





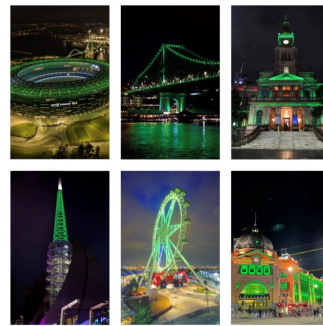
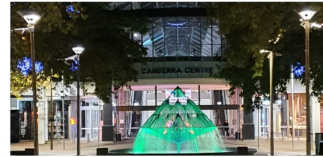
Green Foreign Ministry SPD 2021

For the Green Foreign Ministry campaign, Ambassador and Carmel planted Australian native trees at the Embassy of Ireland in Canberra and Canberra Irish Club
#GreenForeignMinistry
#Meaningtothegreening



Global Greening

This year marks the twelfth year of Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative that saw many attractions and landmark sites turning green to mark St Patrick's Day. This year, in particular, Tourism Ireland's focus was to bring positivity and hope to our Diaspora across the globe. At a time when people living overseas cannot travel home, we want to shine a green light in as many locations around the world as possible, giving our Diaspora a sense of connection with home and reminding them that we cannot wait to welcome them back, as soon as it is possible to do so. The success of the Global Greening initiative is due in no small part to the great work that has been carried out across the world by our Diaspora with the active support of Ireland's global network of Diplomatic Missions. ACT and Canberra had 12 'greenings' across the territory, the largest number to date - well done Canberra! - Canberra Abú.



There is a Government Advisory against all non-essential international travel. For the latest travel guidance see gov.ie - [Search for services or information \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie) For the latest guidance relating to mandatory hotel quarantine on the same website: www.gov.ie please search for Mandatory hotel quarantine.



#COVID19
UPDATE



Whatever you're going through, Samaritans Ireland's volunteers in Ireland are here to listen. Dial 1800570699 for free from Australia. Follow them on



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We're here
when life's
difficult**

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*No international prefixes needed.
Calls from an Australian mobile or landline are free.



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Useful Links/Resources

Department of Foreign Affairs

www.dfa.ie

Embassy of Ireland, Canberra

www.dfa.ie/australia

Consulate General of Ireland Sydney

www.dfa.ie/sydney

Honorary Consulate of Ireland Perth

www.consulateofirelandwa.com.au/

Australian Department of Home Affairs

www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Support Agencies:

Brisbane:

Irish Australian Support Association of Qld Inc (IASAQ)

Tel: +61 7 3391 1300

Mobile: +61 432 087 328

Email: info@iasaq.com.au

Web: <https://www.iasaq.com.au/>

Melbourne:

Irish Australian Support and Resource Bureau

Tel: +61 3 9482 3865

Email: info@iasrb.org

Web: <https://www.iasrb.org/>

Perth:

Claddagh Association

Tel: +61 8 9249 9213

Email: admin@claddagh.org.au

Web: <https://claddagh.org.au/>

Dublin:

Cross Care Migrant Project

Tel: +353 (0)1 873 2844

Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie

Web: <https://www.migrantproject.ie/>

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