



OLLSCOIL NA
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The magazine for
University of Galway
alumni, staff and friends

Cois Coiribe

SUMMER 25 | IN FOCUS EDITION

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...and more.



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Cois Coiribe *Impact.*

Summer 2025
In Focus Edition

The online publication for views and opinions from University of Galway's top academics, researchers, and alumni.

A window into the ground-breaking research and cutting-edge innovation driven by our University community. Explore our In Focus edition today.

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Foreword from the Interim President Focal ón Uachtarán Eatramhach

Professor Peter McHugh,
Interim President, University of Galway

Fáilte is fiche go dtí eagrán an gheimhridh
d'Iris Alumni Ollscoil na Gaillimhe, *Cois Coiribe*.

Welcome to the summer edition of *Cois Coiribe*, *In Focus*.

This is a pivotal moment for University of Galway.

As we mark 180 years of education and research in Galway, we do so with a renewed sense of direction, ambition, and global responsibility. From our distinctive location on the Atlantic edge of Europe – rooted in the culture, language, and landscape of the West of Ireland – we look outwards, ready to respond and shape the future.

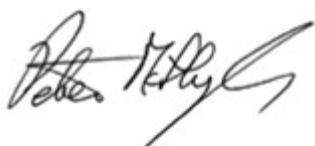
We recently launched our new *University Strategy, Of Galway, For the World 2025-30*, a reflection of who we are as those 'of Galway', and how our ambitions for the world are set out clearly: to nurture talent, to advance impactful research and innovation, and to invest in a sustainable and inclusive environment where all members of our university community can thrive. At the heart of this plan are **our people** and **our place**.

Alongside this, I'm delighted to introduce *In Focus*, the summer digital edition of *Cois Coiribe*, University of Galway's Alumni Magazine, which brings our mission to life. It explores the cutting edge of research and innovation at our University, spanning climate action, sustainable energy, biodiversity, human rights, and global justice.

Showcasing the work of established leaders alongside emerging voices, these stories reflect a university deeply committed to academic excellence, meaningful collaboration, and research with real-world impact – anchored in the west of Ireland, 'Of Galway, For the World'.

As you read through these stories, I hope you are as inspired as I am by the depth of our impact, research, creativity and collaborations. We nurture talent and generate knowledge that serves both our region and the world.

Le gach dea-ghuí





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Dates for your 2025 Diary

Friday 23 May

2025 Alumni Awards Gala Banquet

Celebrate our outstanding alumni at this prestigious annual event. More Information [here](#).

Tuesday 3 June

New York Alumni Event

Special Alumni Event, NYC. Register [here](#).

Wednesday 11 June

Cumann Caoga Bliain – 50 Year Reunion

Join us for the 50th Anniversary Reunion, celebrating the Class of 1975. Register [here](#).

Tuesday 22 July

10 Year Reunion

Calling the class of 2015. Join us for our inaugural 10-Year Reunion BBQ during Galway International Arts Festival with a package to include admission to 'Picture This' playing at the Big Top. Relive memories and celebrate a decade since graduation. Limited tickets! Details and Registration [here](#).

Saturday 26 July

Alumni BBQ and Concert

Enjoy a BBQ at Sult College Bar, followed by a concert during the Galway International Arts Festival. Details to be announced.

Friday 29 August

20 & 25 Year Reunions

Calling the classes of 2000 and 2005. Celebrate your milestones at your alma mater and Sult College Bar with great food, fun, and friends. Details and Registration [here](#).

Saturday 6 September

30, 35, 40 and 45 Year Reunions

Graduates from 1980, 1985, 1990, and 1995! Join us at your alma mater to celebrate the anniversary of your graduation. Meet up with friends you haven't seen in - whisper it - decades, relive your college years and enjoy a terrific day and night back in the University. So save the date and start spreading the word now. Details and Registration [here](#).

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All Boats Rising: An Introduction to the Ryan Institute

Prof Frances Fahy,
Director of the Ryan Institute,
University of Galway

Cois Coiribe is delighted to share the thoughts of our Director of the Ryan Institute, Prof Frances Fahy. Embark on a journey of discovery, ambition, and expertise, and explore the evolving odyssey that is University of Galway's transformative Ryan Institute.

At its heart, our Institute offers a space to collaborate, because no single discipline can meet the demands of the global challenges ahead.

The phrase 'a rising tide lifts all boats' feels especially apt in the context University of Galway. Our collective success – driven by world-class research, innovation, and the dedication and talent of our staff and students – has a transformative effect on the well-being of our region, just as the vitality of our region resonates back into the life of our University

The phrase only truly holds if you're in a boat.

Over the past two decades, as a geographer and social scientist at University of Galway, I've worked alongside communities and collaborators to explore just energy transition pathways, with a particular focus on inclusive participation in environmental research and action. My work strives to support society, policymakers, and stakeholders in the urgent task of transforming unsustainable systems. As Director of the Ryan Institute, I am deeply proud of our thriving community of researchers who are also driving this agenda, and in so doing, ensure that everyone benefits from the rising tide.

At the Ryan Institute, our vision is to lead transformative, transdisciplinary research that sustains the planet and serves the public good. We believe the most pressing challenges of our time – climate change, biodiversity loss, public health and sustainable food and energy systems – require more than technical solutions. They require collaboration, courage, and most especially, community.

The Ryan Institute is University of Galway's largest research institute and the central home for our environmental, and wider sustainability, research. The Centres and Clusters within the Institute bring together and promote cooperation between outstanding researchers from a diverse array of disciplines, along with emerging talent and trusted partners across academia, industry, and society.

These research groups – focussing on Ocean Research and Exploration, Energy, Environment and Health, Agriculture, Food Systems and Bioeconomy, International Development Innovation, Built Environment and Smart Cities, Biodiversity and Bioresources and Economic and Social Impact. In addition, our members have leadership positions in National

Centres of Excellence such as Construct Innovate, MaREI and iCRAG.

At its heart, our Institute offers a space to collaborate, because no single discipline can meet the demands of the global challenges ahead.

This issue of *Cois Coiribe* highlights some of the exceptional Ryan Institute researchers and their cutting-edge work. For example, Rory Monaghan introduces the European SH2AMROCK project, a bold vision for Ireland's energy future, exploring how hydrogen from indigenous wind energy can fuel a low-carbon, energy-independent island. Sinéad

Waters explains how innovative research and national collaboration are defining the future of agri-food, helping to transform food systems for greater sustainability and resilience. Audrey Morley examines the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), highlighting ►

Overall, the contributions contained within this issue illustrate the rich breadth of research and other activities taking place across the Ryan Institute, and they also point toward a shared ethos: an unwavering commitment to sustaining our planet through research excellence.



how shifts in ocean currents could dramatically reshape our climate. Una Murray's contribution highlights the significance of justice within environmental research, sitting well within the social sciences, exploring the relationship between people and place.

The Ryan Institute continues to grow, with new members joining our community every month. Christina Tadiri and Maggie Reddy, new lecturers to University of Galway, are featured in our Spotlight On series. As outlined in their contributions, Maggie's unique research explores the DNA of marine biodiversity, and Christina's innovative work in eco-epidemiology explores the complex interplay between disease, wildlife, and environmental change. Early career researcher Isuri Weerasinghe delves 'Into the Deep', investigating the delicate balance between deep-sea innovation and marine ecosystem protection.

Over the past year, the Ryan Institute has strengthened a number of key local regional and global partnerships, including advancing agreements with Údarás na Gaeltachta, National Parks and Wildlife Services, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN to deepen collaboration around sustainability and innovation at all levels. Our close work with Galway City Council to develop and conserve our city's assets is reflected in the Q&A piece with Tiarnan McCusker, from Galway City's Climate Action Team.

Overall, the contributions contained within this issue illustrate the rich breadth of research and other activities taking place across the Ryan Institute, and they also point toward a shared ethos: an unwavering commitment to sustaining our planet through research excellence.

The impact of our collective energy is immense. Ryan Institute researchers are both leaders of, and core partners in, major national and international funding successes, including multiple EPA and Research Ireland-funded initiatives, as well as prestigious EU Horizon grants supporting hydrogen energy, innovations in the built environment, marine ecosystems, and climate mitigation. These partnerships testify

Building on our rich and long tradition of marine and coastal research and our advantageous location on the west coast of Europe, the Ryan Institute is strategically placed to provide world class transformative leadership in ocean research and innovation.

to the excellence and innovation of our people, our place, and our mission.

It is clear from the selection of work highlighted in this issue that we in the Ryan Institute do not simply respond to global change; we shape it. With integrity, with imagination, and with impact.

We are working to develop and deliver on this vision. refurbishing any ageing core facilities. For example, our Mace Head Atmospheric Research Station has been a site for marine and anthropogenic aerosol measurements since 1958 and is internationally renowned for generating one of the longest outstanding datasets of aerosol measurements in the world, and the longest such dataset in Europe. The Ryan Institute Marine Research and Innovation Station in Carna is over 50 years old and is a distinctive research infrastructure that is in urgent need of investment.

As Ireland's only third-level institute with such unique infrastructure, these assets, with investment, offer us a competitive advantage and the potential to be the hub of excellence and leadership in marine and ocean science research, and a national level and well beyond. Building on our rich and long tradition of marine and coastal research and our advantageous location on the west coast of Europe, the Ryan Institute is strategically placed to provide world class transformative leadership in ocean research and innovation. The ambition to consolidate Galway as the 'Ocean Capital of the World' is well within our grasp.

Recently, while in conversation with colleagues from our University's Sustainability Office, I was struck by how far University of Galway has come: from chasing good practice to *becoming* good practice. Other institutions are now looking to us for leadership in the sustainability arena, and rightly so.

We are now in a position to build on this momentum, asserting our leadership across marine, climate, energy, food and agriculture, biodiversity, and overall planetary health. Galway's natural assets – its coastline, peatlands, rivers, and lakes – are matched only by our human assets. Our researchers, our students, our professional staff, our wider communities and partners. By embracing both, we can move forward; together.

To the Ryan Institute operations and technical teams: thank you. Many of you have supported our research community for decades, and I am deeply grateful for your dedication. Thanks to our colleagues in the research offices and across the University research community. My thanks to all our researchers who have contributed to this issue and to the *Cois Coiribe* editorial team – thank you for shining a light on our collective work.

My vision for the Ryan Institute is to continue to harness and support the full potential of our people and our place, to progress our continued and collective ambition for transdisciplinary research that sustains the planet and serves the public good.



As Director of the Ryan Institute, I am committed to maintaining and growing these efforts. I aim to support our researchers as they continue to contribute and lead in their respective fields, while ensuring a work environment where staff feel valued and an institute where researchers want to belong.

My vision for the Ryan Institute is to continue to harness and support the full potential of our people and our place, to progress our continued and collective ambition for transdisciplinary research that sustains the planet and serves the public good.

As a final call to action: let's all get on the boat, and row together!

Prof Frances Fahy is the Director of the Ryan Institute, the largest research institute at the University of Galway and home to environmental and sustainability research. She is an Established Professor of Geography at University of Galway, where she leads several international research teams on sustainable consumption and energy citizenship research.

Frances has been recipient of the President's Awards for Research Excellence (2017), Societal Impact (2017), Teaching Excellence (Team Award 2020), and the Irish Research Council's National Ally Award for Mentoring and Supervision (2023). A Fulbright Scholar, Frances previously served as Head of Geography at University of Galway and is the past President of the Geographical Society of Ireland.

Galway as the 'Ocean Capital of the World' is well within our grasp.

The SH2AMROCK Project: A Galway Solution to a Global Problem

Prof Rory Monaghan,
Head of Mechanical Engineering,
University of Galway

From diesel to electric or somewhere in between, vehicles of all types ply our roads and motorways day and night. In our busy modern work culture, transport is an important day-to-day issue for everyone, with much improved public transport likely to be the solution. In this *Cois Coiribe* feature, Professor Rory Monaghan of the Energy Research Centre, Ryan Institute and School of Engineering examines the promise of hydrogen – one of the newest developments in sustainable energy. He explains his work toward bringing that promise to fruition through creation of a ‘Hydrogen Valley’, and how Ireland, with its enormous renewable energy resources, is ideally positioned to lead in this area.

Traffic. It is the one conversation topic that animates people in Galway more than the weather. To bypass or not to bypass, *sin í an cheist!* To the list of topics to be avoided in polite conversation with strangers, Galwegians should surely add the Galway City Ring Road, or GCRR, as the proposed bypass is officially known. While the resubmitted planning application makes its way through An Bord Pleanála at the speed of a Saturday afternoon drive along the Headford Road, it is easy to forget that a solution to our traffic woes already exists.

Transport for Ireland reported that 2023... saw record use across Ireland of buses, trains, and trams, with passenger numbers exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Public transport is having a moment

Transport for Ireland reported that 2023, the most recent year for which full figures are available, saw record use across Ireland of buses, trains, and trams, with passenger numbers exceeding pre-pandemic levels by over 5%. While progress is still stalled on the Metro North project to connect Dublin Airport to the city centre, other initiatives are speeding ahead. Dart+ will triple the length of Dublin's electrified light rail network. BusConnects, an ambitious data-driven plan to expand bus network coverage, reliability, and punctuality, has seen surging passenger numbers in Dublin, and is now being rolled out in other cities. Across the country, passenger railway lines are being upgraded and doubled-up, stations are being extended, and plans are being drawn up to revitalise decommissioned lines, such as the Western Rail Corridor.

Galway has not missed the bus

Founded in 2016, CitySwift is a Galway-based mobility tech company that uses data to optimise bus fleet operations in Ireland, the UK, and as far afield as Hong Kong. Its deal with Transport for London will see its platform available to 9,000 buses serving 1.8 billion annual passenger journeys. Bus Éireann, Ireland's public bus operator, switched all urban buses in Galway from diesel double-deckers to diesel electric hybrids, which are estimated to reduce emissions by over 30%. These new hybrids will be key to the rollout of BusConnects in Galway in the near future. Low- and zero-emission technology is not only cleaner, quieter, and more pleasant for passengers and people on the streets, but reduced diesel use insulates us from fare hikes due to volatile fossil fuel prices. ►



Why not full electric?

Athlone and Limerick have recently moved to full battery electric fleets. This is an excellent option where daily driving distances are relatively short, terrain is flat, and the electricity grid has sufficient capacity to support the power demand of fleet charging. The frequent stopping of buses additionally allows for battery recharging through regenerative braking. But what about longer journeys? Regional buses based in Galway serve towns such as Westport, Clifden, Gort, and Athlone. Intercity coaches based in Galway travel to Derry, Dublin, Cork, and back, several times a day. The prospects of replacing these diesel behemoths with battery electric models are currently dim, unless coach operators are willing to buy extra buses to cover long midday charging times. What is the solution?

A bright idea from the lightest molecule

The reason batteries struggle to move heavy-duty vehicles along long-haul routes is their low 'energy density'. Energy density refers to the quantity of energy a technology can store in a given volume or mass. Relatively low energy density batteries mean an electric coach can either travel a long distance or carry lots of passengers and luggage, but unfortunately not both! It also means charging times in the range 30 minutes to 2 hours, compared to 5 to 10 minutes refuelling time for diesel.

This is where hydrogen comes in. Even though hydrogen is a gas that needs heavy steel or composite tanks to contain it, and a fuel cell or an engine to convert its energy to motive power (the energy used to drive machinery), its energy density is 3 to 4 times higher than that of batteries. This means hydrogen-fuelled vehicles can travel nearly the same distances as their diesel counterparts. However, the big challenge with hydrogen is getting it.

Despite being the most abundant element in the universe, hydrogen is notoriously difficult to come by. It cannot be considered a fuel, like oil, because unlike oil it cannot be readily extracted from the earth.

Instead, hydrogen is known as an 'energy carrier', which must be created by pulling it from some chemically stable substance like water or fossil fuels. The energy needed to do this makes hydrogen expensive.

Any hydrogen used in Ireland should come from electrolysis ... [which is] the use of electricity, preferably renewable, to split water. Ireland is well positioned in this regard because of its enormous renewable energy resources.

Obviously, using fossil fuels to create hydrogen makes no environmental sense, especially in Ireland, where we have very few fossil fuels to begin with. Any hydrogen used in Ireland should therefore come from electrolysis. This involves the use of electricity, preferably renewable, to split water. Ireland is ideally positioned in this regard because of its enormous renewable energy resources – far in excess of long-term electricity demands – which are mostly untapped. Surplus wind and solar power could be diverted to electrolysis to make hydrogen to decarbonise the parts of our energy system unsuited to electrification, like coaches, trucks, factories, cement works, and data centres. In this vision, hydrogen is a store for renewables, essentially charging up on windy days, releasing its energy on calm days.

Hydrogen valleys as the solution to a chicken-and-egg problem

Despite hundreds of academic studies highlighting the importance of renewable hydrogen to full energy system decarbonisation, progress on the ground has been slow. Fleet operators will not buy expensive hydrogen-fuelled coaches until a reliable hydrogen supply exists, but suppliers will not build expensive electrolysis until they have committed hydrogen buyers.

All the while, technologies remain expensive while deployment, and therefore production volumes, remains small. What comes first? It's chicken-and-egg for the renewable age. This is where the European Union has stepped in and created the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, whose mission is to fund the deployment of clusters of hydrogen producers, distributors, dispensers, and users. In the lexicon of Brussels, these clusters are known as 'Hydrogen Valleys'.

We at University of Galway are leading SH2AMROCK, a 5-year, €54-million project to build, operate, and grow Ireland's first Hydrogen Valley. It incorporates all elements of the green hydrogen value chain, from production and storage to distribution and dispensing, and on to end-use. It has a consortium of 28 members from 12 countries with funding of €7.5 million from the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, as well as €0.5 million from UK Research and Innovation.

The European Union has stepped in and created the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, whose mission is to fund the deployment of clusters of hydrogen producers

SH2AMROCK will see renewable hydrogen production at a wind farm in the midlands, transportation of hydrogen to Galway Port, operation of Ireland's first purpose-built hydrogen refuelling station, and use of hydrogen to decarbonise Bus Éireann's regional and intercity coach fleets, as well as local freight, haulage, and logistics fleets. The project will see hydrogen used to decarbonise high-temperature heat demand at a facility in the Galway region operated by Colas, a leading provider of end-to-end solutions in the road maintenance sector in Ireland, and to conduct zero-emissions flight trials between Connemara and the Aran Islands with Aer Arran Islands. Of crucial importance, SH2AMROCK will be the seed from which a nationwide hydrogen network can grow.



Positioning Galway as a European leader

SH2AMROCK encapsulates University of Galway's ethos of: Purpose, People, Place. It builds upon the work of Dr Pau Farras, Dr Thomas Van Rensburg, and Dr Brendan Flynn, and my own work in previous EU-funded hydrogen projects, including HUGE, SEAFUEL, Green Hysland, GenComm, and HEAVENN.

In conclusion, the SH2AMROCK project not only offers a blueprint to leverage renewable resources to tackle local challenges but also paves a way for sharing findings and insights worldwide.

By reducing diesel imports and pollution emissions, every kilometre travelled on hydrogen-powered vehicles brings Ireland and the world closer to a more sustainable future. Making Galway's public transport more sustainable will undoubtedly enhance the quality of life and work in the city. As one of only 18 Hydrogen Valleys in Europe, SH2AMROCK places University of Galway at the forefront of impactful research globally, while contributing to a solution for our beloved city's infamous tailbacks!

As one of only 18 Hydrogen Valleys in Europe, SH2AMROCK places University of Galway at the forefront of impactful research globally, while contributing to a solution for our beloved city's infamous tailbacks!

Rory Monaghan is the Professor in Energy Systems Engineering at University of Galway and Head of Mechanical Engineering. He leads the Erin Research Group, which investigates green hydrogen and other technologies to decarbonise society's energy use. Rory is a Co-Principal Investigator in MaREI, the SFI Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine Research, and leads the Energy Research Centre in the University's Ryan Institute. He is the Coordinator of the EU-funded SH2AMROCK project to establish the first Hydrogen Valley in Ireland. Rory was raised in Galway, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He received Master's and PhD degrees in the same field from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

What is Just Transition? Combining Expertise for the Global Public Good

It is well known that the negative impacts of climate change are not evenly shared and that impoverished rural communities are in greater danger from its effects. Researching ways to combat harm brought about by climate change is the cornerstone of Dr Una Murray's work, particularly the use of social safety nets to alleviate damage. In this article, she explains how her research work across the globe has led her to the concept of the Just Transition, concerned with ensuring fairness in climate actions. Her vision is for a Just Transition cluster at University of Galway, engaging multiple disciplines in working toward the global public good and social justice.

Cois Coiribe (CC): Across decades, you have worked directly with leading international development organisations, ranging from UN agencies, governments, and bilateral donors to NGOs and more. What inspired you to pursue this career path?

Una Murray (UM): I've always been curious about different places and geographies. My uncle, who lived in the Philippines, would write to us on delicate tissue-thin pages, each letter adorned with vivid and unusual stamps that captured my imagination. As a teenager, those letters became my window into a vast and diverse world beyond Ireland.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Education, I taught in inner-city Dublin, where I witnessed firsthand the impact of poverty on children's ability to attend school regularly and achieve their full learning potential. It became clear to me how deeply inequalities influence life's opportunities, restricting access to education and limiting future prospects – the inequities were real, affecting every part of a child's education and ability to dream of a different future.

Having also taught in Spain and the UK, I remained curious about different social systems and how they shape the way people live and move and adapt to their surroundings. I travelled to India, a country so rich in culture but burdened by inequalities. Studying international development at the University of East Anglia, I was the only Irish student in my class. This gave me the opportunity to learn from peers from diverse regions and backgrounds, including South America, Africa, and the Pacific region, each bringing their own perspectives on the world's most pressing challenges.

I worked at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation on a programme in socioeconomic and gender analysis across Asia and Africa. This programme supported UN-funded initiatives by asking socioeconomic questions as part of a technical project, aiming to ensure work was grounded in local contexts. My journey was shaped by my interest in different cultures and environments, my travels, and my deep desire to understand the complexities of inequality.

CC: In addition to holding the role of Programme Director of the MA in International Development Practice, you lead two Irish Research Council (IRC) COALESCE-funded research projects. Can you give us a brief overview of these projects and their goals?

UM: I worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) evaluating climate change and migration work in global initiatives, as I had prior experience evaluating programmes to support migrant domestic workers. I also reviewed a UNICEF programme supporting children on the move in the Horn of Africa, and consulted for Irish Aid. These experiences grounded my research proposals to the IRC COALESCE programme. ►

Looking back, I can see how my journey was shaped by ... my deep desire to experience and understand the complexities of inequality.



In collaboration with Addis Ababa University, we investigated how climate change impacts rural households and documented their perspectives on migration as an adaptation strategy. We also examined how social safety nets (access to cash and work opportunities) can enhance household resilience or facilitate mobility. Although climate-related disasters and slow-onset climate changes are affecting rural areas, our research found that those who migrated were primarily seeking jobs, bringing their rural and agricultural skills with them to urban areas. Our second IRC COALESCE project builds on these findings by exploring how support for rural-to-urban migrants can leverage their existing skills, clarifying what 'green jobs' mean in the East African context, and assessing whether climate finance mechanisms are effectively supporting this transition.

Our research aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1.3 (social protection), 10.7 (migration), and 13 (climate action). At COP28 I presented our work on the role of social safety nets for climate-related loss and damage, and moderated a panel discussion, underscoring the importance of our findings on the global stage.

CC: As a UN Evaluator and Consultant, you've worked on a range of projects, particularly on child labour in agriculture. Can you describe the problem, and any solutions?

UM: International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182 defines the worst forms of child labour, including mining, children as soldiers, prostitution, and hazardous work that harms children's development. Child labour in agriculture is complex, and there are hazards for children in handling pesticides, operating heavy machinery, or engaging in strenuous labour. Long hours in the fields can lead to heatstroke, dehydration, or water-borne illnesses. Excessive physical work at a young age can lead to musculoskeletal injuries and stunted growth, and affect the ability of children to attend school.

However, it is common worldwide – including in Ireland – for children in

At COP28 I presented our work on the role of social safety nets for climate-related loss and damage, and moderated a panel discussion, underscoring the importance of our findings on the global stage.

rural areas to help on family farms. Working in agriculture only becomes a challenge if it is physically damaging and prevents children from attending school, which can impede their future opportunities. Literacy is crucial for children's futures – without basic reading and maths skills, they struggle throughout life. Illiteracy can prevent youth from understanding safety instructions, legal notices, or contracts, forcing them to rely on others for essential tasks.

Through project evaluations, I assessed efforts to facilitate access to education, but poverty remains the main barrier. As one mother told me, she couldn't send her child to school because there was no one to scare away birds from her newly planted crops – and there was no transportation to school in any case. School feeding programmes – a form of social protection – play a vital role in encouraging attendance, offering both sustenance and a reason to stay in school.

CC: You supported the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as an Expert Advisor in Working Group II, to scope the Panel's Seventh Assessment Report, focusing on climate change impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Can you explore your contribution at the intersection of climate change and human migration?

UM: I was honoured to be nominated by the Government to the Intergovernmental Panel, as an invited expert at a meeting to 'scope out' the outline for the next report. IPCC reports are published every 5 to 7 years and serve as the most authoritative assessments of the latest climate science, impacts, adaptation, and mitigation

strategies. I participated in Working Group II, which focuses on assessing the impacts of climate change, adaptation strategies, and vulnerabilities.

Working on this Panel with experts from every country was an exciting opportunity, and my experience, research, and ongoing work on migration and human mobility in the context of climate change enabled me to contribute substantively to this important work.

I made efforts to ensure the scope of the new report highlighted how poverty intersects with the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Compiling the agenda with colleagues, we discussed content for social protection or cash transfers to support climate change adaptation. Our Group worked closely with the others (Working Group I on the physical science of climate change and Working Group III on mitigation strategies) to present an integrated understanding of climate change.

In February 2025, world governments gathered in Hangzhou in China to agree the draft outlines of the three Working Group contributions to the Seventh Assessment Report (AR7), a landmark moment in the global effort to tackle climate change.

Ideally, shifts to carbon neutral economies should strive to create opportunities for more just and resilient societies.

CC: You are currently undertaking research under the theme of Just Transition. Can you break down this theme into core concepts, describing its framework as applied to our contemporary global climate, both environmental and societal?

UM: Just Transition is concerned with ensuring fairness in climate actions, so that shifts toward sustainability do not worsen existing inequalities. Ideally, shifts to carbon neutral economies should strive to create opportunities for more just and resilient societies. The Just

Transition concept has been gaining prominence since 2009, when the International Labour Organization held discussions with governments, trade unions, and employers to ensure that workers reliant on high-carbon industries receive retraining and support to diversify their livelihoods. The concept of Just Transition has now moved beyond workers in fossil fuel-intensive industries, to ensure those designing climate policies consider social justice. Inevitable change should prevent disproportionate burdens on vulnerable populations. Ireland's Climate Action Plan and Just Transition Commission are already integrating these principles into policymaking. Key principles must include a focus on equity, recognising that climate change impacts are experienced unevenly. Without resources it is more difficult to adapt or readjust lifestyles, even though vulnerable and low-income groups may use less resources.

[The Just Transition concept] is really concerned with ensuring fairness in climate actions, so that shifts toward sustainability do not worsen existing inequalities.

My colleague Dr Hanna-Kaisa Hoppania from Political Science and I organised two ENLIGHT Galway Summer Schools focused on Equity and Sustainability Transitions. These were really powerful, with students discussing these issues at length. We also had contributions from colleagues across the University, enriching the discussions. We aligned the summer schools to our University's Strategic Plan, where sustainability is a core value. Thirty postgraduate students from our University and seven other ENLIGHT universities unpacked what these concepts can look like in practice, exploring how to shift toward a low-carbon economy while ensuring that individuals, communities, and workers are not left behind.

CC: Continuing the discussion on Just Transition, can you describe key issues in this theme, how they will

be investigated, your aspiration for a Just Transition cluster, and how the Ryan Institute can help facilitate these outcomes.

UM: University of Galway is well-positioned to lead in Just Transition research. Staff and students have strong interest in ensuring climate change actions embrace equity and enable pathways to Just Transition. The concept of Just Transition is increasingly shaping funding landscapes, and it would be important not to miss opportunities for funding, partnerships, and education. A research cluster on Just Transition would address key contemporary knowledge gaps related to the social, economic, and environmental consequences of shifting to a low-carbon economy. University of Galway research could enhance policy impact and the visibility of global research. The research could also lead to curriculum integration, ensuring our University remains at the forefront of cutting-edge interdisciplinary work.

We already have active research in key areas, including climate mitigation and adaptation, social protection, energy transition, gender equality, and human mobility. In Geography, we have research on social protection and climate change adaptation, sustainable consumption and energy citizenship. In the Centre for Global Women's Studies, we investigate gender, equality, and policy in this context. The Ryan Institute's Agriculture, Food Systems, and Bioeconomy Research Centre is looking at climate resilience. Complementing all of this is research on climate change and human rights in the Irish Centre for Human Rights.

The interdisciplinary topic domain of Just Transition, Equity and Climate Change would help to connect climate action-related research across the University with social impact. A focus on policy processes would also ensure that our University provides innovative contributions that have impact. The Ryan Institute's Centre for International Development Innovation (CIDI) offers an excellent platform for networking and the sharing of research results, webinars, and debates.

I strongly believe that a Just Transition research cluster at

University of Galway can connect climate action research with social impact across disciplines, and facilitate policy contributions that directly influence decision-making. Initiatives such as these strengthen our global research networks and international collaborations. This Just Transition research cluster could contribute to the global public good and support Ireland's role in climate action and social justice.

This Just Transition research cluster could contribute to the global public good and support Ireland's role in climate action and social justice.



Dr Una Murray has worked on international development topics for over 30 years and has led projects for various international development organisations globally. Notably, she was nominated to participate in the scoping of the IPCC 7th Assessment Report. She established and is Programme Director of the MA in International Development Practice at University of Galway and currently leads two IRC COALESCE-funded research projects.

Dr Una Murray works as a UN Evaluator and Consultant across a wide range of United Nations organisations, focusing on topics such as migration, labour, and gender. She evaluated the institutional response of the International Organization for Migration to climate change, was a senior evaluator for UN IFADs thematic on gender, and continues to evaluate UNICEF projects and programmes. Dr Una Murray also lectures on a number of University of Galway Master's programmes.

Into the Deep: Searching the Ocean for Climate Solutions

Isuri Weerasinghe,
PhD Student, Ryan Institute,
University of Galway

Cois Coiribe is delighted to highlight the journey of Isuri Weerasinghe, a current PhD Student with the Ryan Institute at University of Galway. She holds an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Marine Environment and Resources, which she regards as changing her whole life trajectory, prompting her move from Sri Lanka. To this day, her experiences continue to inspire her enthusiasm for this area of study. In this article, she explains where her inspiration comes from and her persistent passion for Ocean Sciences.

Mesopelagic fish have gained particular attention as potentially significant elements of the ocean carbon cycle.

Cois Coiribe (CC): As an Erasmus student, you earned a Joint Master's from the Universities of Southampton, Bordeaux, and the Basque Country, conducting investigations on microplastics in fish through collaboration with the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton. What drew you to this area of research?

Isuri Weerasinghe (IW): As a child, I grew up watching golden sunsets on the white sandy beaches of the beautiful island of Sri Lanka. I knew since then that I always had this hidden passion to dive into the waters of that horizon. Every little aspect connected with the ocean and marine life never failed to fascinate me.

After completing my undergraduate studies with first-class honours in Fisheries and Marine Sciences at the University of Ruhuna, having also received recognition for several other achievements throughout my time in the programme, I earned a phenomenal opportunity to pursue the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree. This changed my entire life trajectory. Truly, it was an amazing two years.

Throughout the Erasmus Mundus programme, I was able to learn from some of the best lecturers and pioneers in various disciplines of oceanography and marine biology. Alongside that, these two years allowed me to experience different

cultures, work with diverse ethnic backgrounds, and most significantly, create a broad network among early career ocean professionals from different countries all over the world. Marine plastic pollution has been a growing concern in the recent past, and according to the European Commission, considerable measures have been implemented to control microplastic pollution in the marine realm by 2030. This triggered my focus on microplastic contamination in marine organisms during my Master's thesis. I was privileged to work actively with the microplastics team at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (LABPLAS project). This was under the brilliant supervision of Professor Richard Lampitt and Dr Alice Horton, and it enabled me to witness first-hand their cutting-edge research.

CC: You are now completing a PhD at University of Galway and are part of iCrag, with your poster and presentation on 'Connecting past and present knowledge to assess the future of our mesopelagic fish resources and ecosystem functioning' receiving accolades last March at the Irish Geological Research Meeting (IGRM). Could you share some key highlights of this research?

IW: Upon completing my Master's degree, I encountered my current – and very interesting – PhD opportunity in deep-sea fish ►

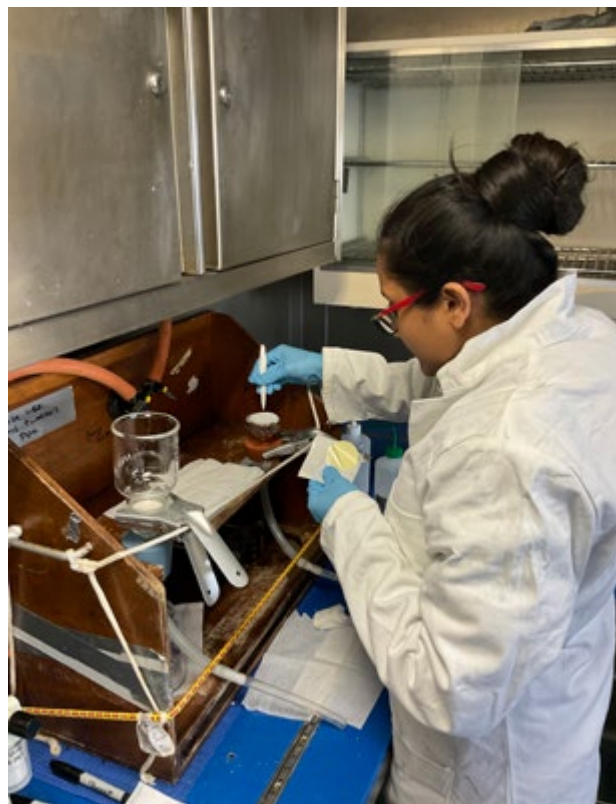
Microplastics (MPs), or plastic particles less than 5 mm in size, have emerged as a major environmental concern in marine ecosystems across the world.



Water sample collection for DNA analysis onboard the Whittard Canyon, Northeast Atlantic, 2023.



Microplastics analysis on fish at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, 2023.



Environmental DNA analysis onboard the Celtic Explorer, May 2024.

migration and carbon cycling, funded by iCrag. Following a successful interview, the Department of Earth and Ocean Science at University of Galway enrolled me in this four-year structured PhD programme. As for key highlights of this research project, I focus primarily on acoustic data collected during journeys to the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, where echo sounders were used across multiple frequencies. I also use hydrography data and environmental DNA analysis to better distinguish acoustic signals. One of the most fascinating components of this study was the opportunity to join multiple research cruises over the last two years. These included the ROV Survey in the Whittard Canyon in RV Celtic Explorer, conducted under the brilliant guidance of Professor Louise Allcock; the Ocean Climate Section Survey, conducted under the supervision of Dr Caroline Cusack in RV Tom Crean; and the International Blue Whiting Survey in RV Celtic Explorer, conducted under Mr Michael O'Malley as chief scientist. All these excursions allowed me to gain invaluable hands-on experience using acoustic data acquisition, working with

environmental DNA, hydrography data collection, remotely operated vehicle (ROV) Operations, and marine mammal observation.

As for other highlights, it is always a pleasure to present our research findings. At last year's IGRM, I was able to present some of the key findings from the ROV Survey, which received honorary mentions. Additionally, I presented scientific posters at the Challenger Society conference in Oban, Scotland, and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) conference in Newcastle, England, which brought more national and international exposure and collaboration to this current research project.

CC: A major association in research into mesopelagic fish is their impact on carbon. Can you give us a brief overview of why it is so important to investigate this relationship, especially in the context of climate change?

IW: Mesopelagic fish account for the majority of world fish biomass, with current estimates indicating it at ≈ 2 to 16 Gt, which is approximately 67–94% of total fish biomass.

As a result of this updated estimate, which is two to ten times greater than formerly accepted micronekton net sampling, mesopelagic fish have gained particular attention as potentially a significant element of the ocean carbon cycle. They play an important role in carbon export due to their substantial diel vertical migrations. This is when a large proportion of these fish consume organic carbon by feeding at night in the epipelagic zone (< 200 metres from the ocean surface), hiding from predators in the mesopelagic zone (200–1,000 metres) during the day.

They transport carbon from the epipelagic zone to the mesopelagic zone through the egestion of faecal matter and carbonates, respiration of carbon dioxide, and mortality through predation or deadfall. Current research maintains that the scale of fish carbon movement is largely uncertain, and its contribution to climate-relevant carbon sequestration is not well documented.

Understanding the biogeochemical role of mesopelagic fish in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean is therefore crucial, as their harvesting could significantly alter biogeochemical

dynamics – not only because of reduced mesopelagic fish biomass but also through a series of cascading changes in the food web dynamics.

CC: Microplastics is a word that is appearing more frequently in headlines these days. Can you speak to its association with the world of marine environments?

IW: Microplastics (MPs), or plastic particles less than 5mm in size, have emerged as a major environmental concern in marine ecosystems across the world. Land-based sources have been estimated to release four times as much plastic into the ocean as marine-based sources. Beyond this, rivers play a substantial role in transporting land-derived material to the ocean, accounting for 2.8–18.6% of total coastal plastic emissions. While river-dominated beaches make up 0.87% of global coastlines, they receive approximately 52% of plastic pollution brought by rivers. Population density, degree of urbanisation, industrialisation within catchment areas, rainfall rates, and external barriers may contribute to the amount and timing of plastic litter carried by rivers. Ingestion of MPs acts as ecotoxicological risks to marine organisms, including damage to their gastrointestinal (GI) tracts and stomachs. MPs have been proven, in neurotoxicology and behavioural modification studies, to cause nematodes, mussels, and fish to exhibit a reduction in locomotion and dietary behaviours under excessive overload conditions. Addressing specific sources of marine litter, such as fishing gear, microplastics from wastewater treatment plants, and atmosphere fallout, is critical for comprehensive understanding and successful mitigation. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and numerous regional conventions serve as important platforms for assessing and addressing these concerns.

CC: You are currently working under the supervision of Dr Martin White and Professor David Reid. How has their guidance assisted your research efforts to date?

IW: Dr Martin White is my principal supervisor and one of the most amazing mentors I've had in my academic career. His extensive

knowledge and long-term proficiency in physical oceanography contributed significantly to my research endeavours. Dr White's advice has been extremely beneficial to my development, providing essential insights into understanding oceanographic data and efficiently relating past environmental records to contemporary hydrography conditions. He was able to consistently offer solutions and answers when I had questions or ran into challenging research problems, and it is always a pleasure to work with him. I genuinely couldn't have asked for a better principal supervisor.

Professor David Reid, my co-supervisor, is currently working as chairperson of the Science Committee in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and was a Principal Investigator in Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management at the Marine Institute in Ireland. I was privileged to work closely with him, an experience which complemented my research journey perfectly due to his profound expertise in fisheries biology, particularly fisheries management and mesopelagic ecosystems. His significant contributions to scientific discourse have greatly enriched my understanding of sustainable ecosystem-based fisheries management, and his guidance has allowed me to study historical acoustic data with contemporary ecological knowledge. He emphasises using environmental DNA approaches, a method which enhanced my analytical capabilities and fostered my own innovative approaches to assessing the future of mesopelagic fish resources.

The culmination of the guidance afforded to me has in no small way successfully assisted my navigation through this multidisciplinary PhD project.

CC: Lastly, what piece of unconventional advice would you give to someone aiming to earn a degree in your area of study?

IW: As a piece of unconventional advice, I'd like to mention that learning new things is not just about reaching destinations, it's a continuous journey. Embracing a true passion for developing new skills and

embarking on new adventures is essential, particularly in a field as vast and fascinating as marine sciences. This subject offers opportunities that span from the North Pole to the South Pole, with numerous interconnected branches. If you're passionate about pursuing a degree in marine sciences and oceanography, you'll find endless paths to explore, ensuring you'll never feel lost on this rewarding journey.

The satisfaction I've experienced in this field is truly beyond words. University of Galway stands out as one of the best institutions to begin this exciting learning adventure, offering exceptional guidance and support. With abundant experienced school faculty and plenty of supportive resources and staff available, University of Galway is an ideal setting to foster your interest and start your passion in this study area.

Isuri Weerasinghe also assists with classes at University of Galway's Youth Academy, which offers courses for secondary students. For more information, contact Enda O'Connell, Outreach Officer for this Youth Academy programme.



Isuri Weerasinghe is a PhD researcher at the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences, University of Galway. She is currently conducting her research on mesopelagic fish migration patterns using hydro-acoustics and environmental DNA in different oceanographic settings in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean – deep-sea canyons, shelf edges, and semi-permanent eddies. She holds an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Marine Environment and Resources.



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Defining the Future of Agri-Food: Methane Mitigation Strategies for Ruminants

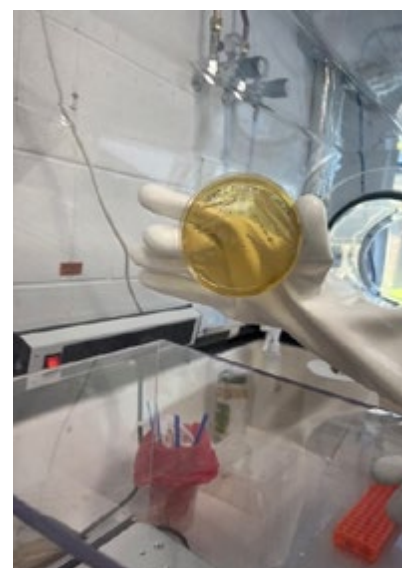
Dr Sinéad Waters,
School of Biological and Chemical
Sciences, Ryan Institute,
University of Galway

In the advent of global climate change and ever-present population growth, food security is something at the top of people's minds. To ensure that the populace is well fed, our agricultural practices need to align with demand. As the population grows, the demand for livestock productivity increases, which leads to higher, methane emissions which is a by-product of animals' digestive processes. This means one issue cannot be addressed without tackling the other. In this *Cois Coiribe* article, Dr Sinéad Waters walks us through what potential and promising solutions look like for a more secure agri-food future.

Why Addressing Cattle Feed Is Crucial to Methane Management

The global population is currently 8.2 billion and is projected to reach 10.2 billion by 2100. With numbers this staggeringly high, it is estimated that we will need a 49% increase in global food production to feed the global population by 2050. Products such as dairy and beef, also referred to as ruminant products, are high in both protein and micronutrients and they are critically important in terms of food security, however global livestock production is contributing to approximately 18% of total anthropogenic – or human-influenced – greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Specifically, ruminant production which is a major source of methane, a GHG that has between 27 and 30 times the global warming potential (GWP) of carbon dioxide. This creates a difficult balancing act for the international agri-food sector, which must find ways to meet the rising food demand while also reducing their environmental impact.



Anaerobic culturing in the Ryan Institute lab.



The Environmental Footprint of Feed Digestion

Agriculture contributes ~37% of Irish GHG emissions, with methane accounting for ~70% of agri-emissions. Most of this methane comes from ruminant animals' digestive processes, particularly from the fermentation of feed in livestock complex digestive tracts, (or four stomachs as it is sometimes referred to). Ireland has committed to reducing agricultural GHGs by 25% and was a signatory to the international Global Methane Pledge, which targets a 30% reduction in methane emissions by 2030. To meet this target, the agricultural sector needs to undergo significant change, and its impact will be felt across the whole of Ireland's agriculture and food production system.

To address this issue, we must first understand the science behind it. Ruminant productivity and methane emissions mainly come from microbiological and biochemical

processes. These processes occur within the rumen, a part of the digestive tract. It is the largest compartment of the forestomach in ruminants, such as cattle and sheep. Dietary carbohydrates are broken down by rumen microbes, and the rumen microbial community provides ruminants the unique ability to convert human indigestible plant matter into high-quality edible protein. Because of this, the rumen is an important aspect of animal biology, contributing to human food security. The process is, however, a double-edged sword, since this intricate microbiological process is accompanied by the production of the GHG methane gas, a by-product of digestion. ►

The rumen is an important aspect of animal biology, contributing to human food security.

Rumen, Microbiomes, and Methane Mitigation

Our understanding of most microbiomes, including the rumen, is limited by their complexity and the lack of sufficient culture collections. It's particularly challenging to culture anaerobic microbiomes, as there would be a need to mimic the very unique rumen environment in order to culture the constituent microbes. At the University of Galway's Ryan Institute, we are working in partnership with the Global Research Alliance Flagship: RUMEN Gateway, to better understand the identity and functionality of the rumen microbiome. Our research focuses on the study of its diversity, ontogeny, and function using state-of-the-art anaerobic culturing facilities and microbiome sequencing technologies.

In recent years, our ability to culture rumen microbes has improved, largely thanks to the development

of new culture media. This includes better rumen simulation, and use of innovative technologies like microencapsulation. A focus on culture – termed culturomics – combined with genome sequencing is returning, and these culture collections are hugely valuable to our fundamental understanding of microbiomes. Not only do they help demystify use of feed additives, probiotics and direct fed microbials (DFMs) and establish their modes of action, but they are also a source of bioactive compounds for biotechnological applications. Data collected from this research contributes to a global effort to expand our knowledge of the rumen microbiome, adding to microbial reference databases to support sequencing analysis.

We collaborate with key stakeholders – such as Teagasc, Irish Cattle Breeding Federation,

DAFM, EU, and industry partners – on the development, validation and implementation of novel methane mitigation strategies using fundamental information on the rumen microbiome. These interventions, which include microbiome-assisted breeding values, feed additives, and novel direct-fed microbials (DFMs), could potentially benefit not only Ireland, but agricultural practices across the globe.

Data collected from this research contributes to a global effort to expand our knowledge of the rumen microbiome, adding to microbial reference databases to support sequencing analysis.

Feed Additives: A Gut-Friendly Solution

Collaborative research between the University, Teagasc, and industry partners has helped us progress the development and evaluation of nutritionally based solutions to reduce methane emissions in the agriculture sector. Through the DAFM-funded project Meth-Abate, we have evaluated a wide range of feed supplements and additives in sheep and cattle diets. These include Bovaer (3-NOP), novel rumen oxidising agents, seaweeds and their extracts, and fats, such as linseed and rapeseed oil supplements.

The data from Meth-Abate showed that using the internationally recognised Bovaer (3-NOP) in ruminant diets is a promising strategy to reduce methane emissions. In Ireland, we investigated the effects of adding 3-NOP to the diet of beef cattle. The results showed that 3-NOP reduced methane emissions resulting from these cattle's digestion processes by 30% with no negative effect on animal health. A novel oxidising agent, which can be

delivered in a pellet format – a major advantage for its on-farm delivery – was capable of rendering a 28% reduction in methane emissions. Supplementing cattle diets with rapeseed and linseed oils reduced methane emissions by 9% and 18% respectively. These results are substantial and show that methane emissions can be reduced if deployed on farms.

In Ireland, where ruminant production is mainly a pasture-based system, it's crucial that the technology developed is designed to reduce agricultural methane emissions works when used in grazing systems. Through the DAFM-funded project Methane Abatement in Grazing Systems (MAGS), we are working on new formulations, including slow-release and bolus technology, which will be developed and tested for pasture-based production systems.



Student Omobolanle, Ryan Institute, based at Teagasc Grange working on the Global Research Alliance Feed Additives project.

Through the DAFM-funded project Methane Abatement in Grazing Systems (MAGS), we are working on new formulations, including slow-release and bolus technology, which will be developed and tested for pasture-based production systems.



L-R: Interim President Prof Peter McHugh, CEO BSAS Maggie Mitchell, Prof Sinead Waters, Prof David Kenny, Minister Noel Grealish | Launch of the recent BSAS Early Careers Day at University of Galway, 7th April 2025.

Genetics and Other Science-Powered Considerations

Genetic improvement is cumulative, and a cost-effective technology. Selecting animals that produce lower methane has been advocated as a promising methane mitigation strategy. A successful collaboration between Teagasc and the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) showed that some beef cattle can emit up to 30% less methane while maintaining the same level of agri-food performance in food production.

Following these findings, the ICBF published the first international enteric methane across-breed genetic evaluations on different breeds, focusing on AI sires. This highlighted the importance of selecting cattle with low-methane emissions.

Our project is integrating microbiome data from thousands of animals to help develop new or novel microbiome-assisted genomic breeding values for methane emissions. Testing across different diets, will help improve the accuracy of selecting animals with lower methane emission. Ultimately, this data will contribute to a global initiative through the EU horizon project, HoloRuminant, which aims to develop and validate international microbiome assisted-breeding programmes.

As our population grows, it's crucial to consider the implications for agricultural practices, not only on food production but also on the environment. By addressing these questions now, we can create a more sustainable and efficient productive agri-food future for our society.



Dr Sinéad Waters is Principal Investigator and Lecturer in Host-Microbiome Interactions in the Environment, specialising in ruminant microbiology and its role in health, efficiency and the environment, particularly enteric methane emissions. She is Principal Investigator of many national and international projects, including DAFM funded MAGS, Meth-Abate, GRA Flagship Feed Additives and Rumen-Gateway projects, as well as the EU Horizon project: HoloRuminant. She also recently led on two large international conferences: British Society for Animal Science (Galway, April 2025) and 9th International Greenhouse Gas and Animal Agriculture Conference (Kenya, Oct 2025).

Spotlight On Dr Christina Tadiri

A Host of Questions on the Biodiversity–Disease Relationship

Dr Christina Tadiri,
Lecturer in Environmental Sciences,
College of Science and Engineering,
University of Galway

Complementing *Cois Coiribe's* Summer Edition focus on Earth, Ocean, and Natural Sciences, this spotlight feature on Dr Christina Tadiri explores her unique research and motivations. Read on to find out more about both her academic insight and her vision for the years to come.

... what is often overlooked ... is that disease can influence biodiversity, either through contributing to species loss, or by mediating inter-species competition through suppressing the more dominant host.

My name is Christina and I'm a Lecturer in Environmental Sciences at University of Galway. I completed my Bachelor's degree and PhD at McGill University in Montréal, Canada, in Environment and Biology, respectively. I am generally interested in how the environment shapes infectious disease dynamics. During my undergrad, I conducted a small risk assessment for Lyme Disease in a local park at a time when Lyme was emerging in Québec, and for my honours research, I used guppies and their ectoparasite *Gyrodactylus* to study how environmental food availability interacted with host condition to shape the spread of disease.

For my PhD, which was funded by the Canadian National Science and Engineering Research Council, I expanded on this work to study how various environmental variables and population-level characteristics – including host resistance and tolerance to infection, connectivity, and distribution – interacted with each other to influence epidemic dynamics in metapopulations.

After my PhD, I spent one year at the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre studying how the social environment, particularly gender and culture, shape human disease epidemics,

including Covid-19. I also spent one year in Biology studying how nutrient enrichment – a common consequence of agricultural and urban runoff – may destabilise aquatic ecosystems. I investigated how that destabilisation may be propagated downstream across metacommunities. I then moved to Basel, Switzerland, on a Marie Curie Fellowship and the University of Basel's Research Fund for Excellent Junior Researchers. While there, I spent three years studying how various environmental variables, including temperature, predation, and bioturbation, influence host–parasite interactions using water fleas (*Daphnia*) and their parasite *Pasteuria ramosa* as a model system.

I joined University of Galway last year to start my own research lab, where I continue to explore these types of questions using a combination of field-observational, lab-experimental, and theoretical work.

I am currently focused on deepening our understanding of the biodiversity–disease relationship. There are two main hypotheses about how biodiversity may influence disease. The 'dilution effect' suggests that higher species diversity can reduce disease transmission by decreasing the

abundance of highly competent disease hosts. The 'amplification effect', on the other hand, posits that diverse communities could harbour more disease vectors or reservoirs, leading to increased disease transmission and potential for spillover. To what degree either of these occur in nature or in what contexts remains an open question in disease ecology. At the same time, what is often overlooked in this question is that disease can influence biodiversity, either through contributing to species loss, or by mediating inter-species competition through suppressing the more dominant host.

I am currently exploring this feedback loop, as well as how abiotic environmental variables – such as temperature, nutrients, and other pollutants – may shift the balance of its outcomes, using *Daphnia* and their parasites as a model through a combination of field and experimental work. In the near future, I plan to scale this work up both spatially and temporally to study how dispersal among increasingly fragmented communities – a process that could benefit biodiversity but could also contribute to the spread of disease – may influence host-parasite co-evolution, and how other environmental variables may modulate these effects.

Dr Christina Tadiiri is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Environmental Science at University of Galway. Her work focuses on host-parasite interactions and dynamics in the context of environmental change. Dr Tadiiri holds a PhD in Biology (2019) from McGill University in Montréal, where she studied how factors at different scales influenced *Gyrodactylus* dynamics in guppies, which earned her a Post-Graduate Scholarship and a Canada Graduate Scholarship from the Canadian National Sciences and Engineering Research Council. She completed post doctorate work at McGill, in both the Clinical Epidemiology and Biology departments. In 2021, she was awarded a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship from the European Commission to the University of Basel in Switzerland, where she studied how various factors shaped *Daphnia*-*Pasteuria* interactions and seasonal dynamics. In September 2024, she started her own lab at the University of Galway.



Spotlight On Dr Maggie Reddy

Seaweeds and Seaforests: Exploring the DNA of Marine Biodiversity

Dr Maggie Reddy,
Lecturer, School of Biological
and Chemical Sciences,
University of Galway

Complementing *Cois Coiribe's* Spring Edition focus on Earth, Ocean, and Natural Sciences, this spotlight feature on Dr Maggie Reddy explores her unique research and motivations. Read on to find out more about both her academic insight and her vision for the years to come.

I also work to bridge the gap between science and industry, advocating for responsible resource use and sustainable practices within the seaweed sector.

My passion for marine biodiversity and the ocean is deeply rooted in my childhood, having grown up on the sunny shores of South Africa. As a child, the sea became my playground, offering endless exploration and discovery. This innate curiosity for the ocean naturally guided me to a career in Marine Science.

I earned my PhD in Marine Science from the University of Cape Town and have been fortunate to carry out research at the University of Gent, Belgium, the University of Algarve, Portugal, and at the University of Galway, Ireland.

Currently, I am a lecturer at the University of Galway, and have held previous appointments as a lecturer at the Nelson Mandela University and the University of Cape Town in South Africa, where I remain an honorary research associate. Beyond teaching and research, I am deeply engaged with the seaweed community. As the secretary of the International Phycological Society and a member of the IUCN Seaweed Specialist Group, I also work to bridge the gap between science and industry, advocating for responsible resource use and sustainable practices within the seaweed sector.

My previous research has focused on documenting and understanding patterns of genetic diversity of seaweeds, with a particular interest in the African Seaforest, which allowed me to sample over 4,000km of coastline, from southern Mozambique to southern Angola. During these marine expeditions, two new mesophotic populations were recorded in southern Mozambique and Vema Seamount and DNA barcodes were provided for two other known mesophotic populations from Cape Vidal and Rocky Bank in South Africa.

Building on this, my current research focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the chemical diversity of the kelp forests and their role in driving evolutionary patterns. I also lead the Marine Biodiversity Lab (@marinebiodiversitylab). Our lab brings together students from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds, allowing us to tackle complex questions that would be otherwise difficult to achieve. Our research sits at the intersection of marine science, molecular biology, and chemistry.

We are committed to documenting and describing marine biodiversity with a particular focus on seaweeds from understudied regions of the world. By using cutting-edge omics techniques, we aim to better understand biodiversity patterns and support the development of regional conservation and management strategies.

my current research focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the chemical diversity of the kelp forests and their role in driving evolutionary patterns.

Dr Maggie Reddy is Lecturer in School of Biological & Chemical Sciences and has a PhD in Marine Biology from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She is a seaweed taxonomist interested in marine biodiversity and biodiscovery research. In general, her research involves applying integrative taxonomy which involves morphology, DNA and (bio) chemistry to study marine organisms with potential application in biotechnology.



Watching the Atlantic: Ireland's Climate Future and the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation

Dr Audrey Morley,
Lecturer in Physical Geography,
Ryan Institute (COREx) and iCRAG Researcher,
University of Galway

Dr Audrey Morley is a leading voice in Irish climate science. Her internationally leading research on reconstructing past ocean climates, for which she has developed robust innovative climate proxies, was published in *Nature Communications* in winter 2024. In this article, *Cois Coiribe* explores Dr Morley's research and insights into the implications of ocean currents and temperatures. Her work on the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) is a crucial part of the global effort to monitor and understand changes that could affect our climate in a major way.

What is AMOC?

In simple terms, the AMOC is a vast system of ocean currents, critical to Ireland's temperate climate. The AMOC functions like a vast conveyor belt, moving warm water northwards from the tropics and returning colder water south at depth. This process moderates Ireland's climate, making it considerably milder than other regions at similar latitudes. But as global temperatures rise, so too does concern that the AMOC could slow significantly or even reach a tipping point. 'A tipping point means a threshold beyond which the system might undergo a dramatic and possibly irreversible change,' explains Dr Morley. 'We're not saying this is imminent, but we are saying that the risk of an AMOC slowdown – or even a partial collapse – is real and must be taken seriously.'

By applying innovative climate proxies to her research, Dr Morley focuses on reconstructing the variability and stability of the AMOC. With mounting evidence that this system is weakening, Dr Morley and her colleagues are working to understand the risks this shift may bring. ►

The AMOC functions like a vast conveyor belt, moving warm water northwards from the tropics and returning colder water south at depth.



Dr Audrey Morley (Chief Scientist) and Ken O'Neill (Bosun) after collecting a 5.55m gravity core from the subpolar North Atlantic.
Photo Credit: Alan Burns

Colder winters, bigger storms, extreme events – a weakened AMOC could negatively affect Irish weather

Even a gradual weakening of the AMOC could have far-reaching implications. These include colder winters, increased storminess, and changes to rainfall patterns across Ireland and northwestern Europe. Marine and coastal ecosystems could also face significant disruption. The Atlantic plays a key role in nutrient and carbon transport, and changes to its circulation could alter marine productivity and carbon drawdown in ways that are not yet fully understood.

To address these uncertainties, researchers in Ireland are focusing on several key areas, one of which is the development of a more robust and region-specific understanding of how AMOC changes could affect Ireland. While global models offer valuable insights, they often lack the detail needed to project local impacts.

Dr Morley explains how high-resolution modelling that can capture what a slowdown might actually look like here – how it could affect our weather, coasts, fisheries – would be critical to furthering our understanding of risks and impacts for Ireland specifically.

International collaboration

International collaboration is also essential. Programmes like OSNAP (Overturning in the Subpolar North Atlantic Program) and RAPID (Rapid Climate Change Programme) offer a shared infrastructure for measuring ocean currents and heat transport across the Atlantic. Irish researchers are active contributors to these efforts, which are helping to build a more complete picture of the AMOC's current state and how it may evolve in the coming decades.



L-R: Dr Audrey Morley (Chief Scientist, University of Galway), Avery Fenton (RA, University of Galway), Dr Alison Jacobel (Middlebury College, USA), Adele Westgard (PhD student Tromsø University)

Extending the observational record

Another major focus is extending our observational record of the AMOC further back in time. The AMOC's direct measurements only cover a few decades, which is a short window in the context of ocean systems that can shift over centuries. To extend that timeline, Dr Morley and her colleagues are combining marine climate archives – such as sediment cores from the seafloor – with contemporary observations. Dr Morley describes how longer records help us understand the natural variability and stability of the AMOC and how it responded to past climate changes. Longer records are crucial for building better models and identifying early warning signs.

One of the most promising frontiers in AMOC research is integrating paleo observations, modern data, and regional models. For example, recent work has shown that freshwater input from the Greenland Ice Sheet may be less critical to AMOC collapse than once thought, with heating and ocean stratification now viewed as major contributors. This has implications not only for Ireland's climate but for how we design emissions pathways and adaptation strategies globally.





The RV Celtic Explorer approaching Sermilik Fjord on the East Greenland Coastline during the SiTrAc Survey August 2023

Realistic scenarios – moderate and extreme

It's not only scientists who need to understand the stakes. The possibility of an AMOC slowdown has captured media attention in recent years, often with alarming headlines predicting everything from an 'Ice Age in Europe' to a sudden climate catastrophe. Dr Morley stresses the importance of clear, coordinated communication between scientists, policymakers, and the public:

'There's been a lot of anxiety caused by headlines that take model results out of context. Yes, some studies simulate a collapse of the AMOC by mid-century – but many of those rely on unrealistic assumptions, like a massive increase in freshwater from Greenland melt. We're not saying those scenarios aren't scientifically useful – they help us test and understand model responses – but they shouldn't be interpreted as forecasts.'

In more realistic scenarios, current models and observations suggest a slowdown of around 2–3 Sverdrups – a unit of ocean flow – by 2050. That level of weakening, while far less dramatic than a collapse, could still have significant implications for Ireland's climate, agriculture, and infrastructure. Dr Morley notes: 'This isn't just about extreme cases. A moderate slowdown can still disrupt our seasons, increase the frequency of extreme weather, and affect ecosystems that communities and economies depend on.'

Ireland's key role in AMOC research

Ireland has a key strategic role to play in AMOC research due to its geographical location. A network of marine data buoys already monitors ocean conditions around the Irish coast, and researchers are exploring how these can be enhanced to track deeper ocean variables most relevant to AMOC dynamics. By adding temperature and salinity sensors at depth, the buoys could act as an early warning system for AMOC-related changes in the subpolar North Atlantic.

Ireland has a key and strategic role to play in AMOC research thanks to its geographical location.

Dr Morley's message is clear: Ireland can and should take a leadership role in this field. With its marine observation capacity, strong academic institutions, and strategic location, the country is well placed to contribute to international efforts – and to protect its own climate future.

'The AMOC is not just a distant oceanic process,' says Dr Morley. 'It's part of what makes our environment liveable, our economy viable, and our ecosystems function. Understanding and monitoring it is in all of our interests.'

Dr Morley's message is clear: Ireland can and should take a leadership role in this field.

As climate change continues to alter the world's oceans, the AMOC may well be one of the most important systems to watch. Thanks to Ryan Institute researchers like Dr Audrey Morley, Ireland is contributing to this effort with rigour, collaboration, and a growing sense of urgency.

Informing the public and working with policymakers

To support informed public discussion and avoid alarmist headlines, Dr Morley and her colleagues in Met Éireann and Maynooth University recommend the development of an online AMOC hub – a single, trusted platform where updates on AMOC research, events, and educational materials can be made available to the public, media, and policymakers. The idea is to not only present scientific findings but also to explain the methods behind them, and the confidence researchers place in different scenarios.

Workshops and expert roundtables are helping to bridge the gap between research and decision-making. Recent Irish AMOC meetings in 2024 and 2025 brought together oceanographers, climate modellers, and policymakers to align research priorities and identify collaborative opportunities. These meetings have helped shape recommendations for targeted investment in modelling, monitoring infrastructure, and communication strategies.



Dr Audrey Morley is a Lecturer in Physical Geography, Ryan Institute (COREx) and iCRAG researcher at the University of Galway and President of the Network of Arctic Researchers in Ireland (NARI).

All Together Now: Working Collaboratively for Climate Action Success

In this article we hear the thoughts of Tiarnan McCusker, the Community Climate Action Officer for Galway City. Tiarnan shares his thinking on young people's passion for sustainability and nature, the exciting community projects the Council is funding, and the first-of-its-kind 2024 Galway climate festival. He tells us about benefitting from the expertise of University of Galway academics, and how we need all sectors of Galway to work together for successful climate action.

Cois Coiribe (CC): Climate sets a precedent for the future, and Galway City, beautifully located at the confluence of land and water, offers a wealth of geographic opportunity for a more sustainable tomorrow. As the Community Climate Action Officer for Galway City, you work with a Climate Action Team. Can you give us a run-down of this arrangement?

Tiarnan McCusker (TM): Each local authority in Ireland now has a Climate Action Team and Galway City Council is lucky to have a team of eight, which includes the Climate Coordinator, Climate Action Officer, Community Climate Action Officer, Engineers, Clerical Officer, and a Graduate. The team is led by the Climate Coordinator, who manages the team, seeks national and EU funding, and coordinates the climate mitigation and adaptation measures for Galway City Council and the wider City. The Climate Action Officer is responsible for implementing the Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, and the Community Climate Action Officer (currently myself) manages the Community Climate Action Fund and overall community engagement.

The Climate Action Plan has the ambitious target for Galway to be a 'Climate Resilient, Biodiversity Rich,

Environmentally Sustainable and Carbon Neutral city by no later than the end of 2050'. It is our first Roadmap to achieving a 51% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 and a pathway to climate neutrality by 2050.

The Plan has 51 actions in total, including Governance, Buildings, Transport, Waste, Energy Usage, Biodiversity and the Westside Decarbonisation Zone. The Decarbonisation Zone is a pilot zone to test how far we can go to decarbonise our economy and society. The Plan really is a gamechanger for the city, as we now have a pathway to decarbonisation.

CC: As a Green-Schools Travel Officer and Environmental Awareness Officer in Galway City Council, you have worked with children and young people taking positive action for the environment. Can you speak to the crucial role younger generations have in climate action initiatives?

TM: From my time working as a Green-Schools Travel Officer for 12 years and subsequently Environmental Awareness Officer for the City Council for 3 years, it's evident how innate a love for nature and the environment is for young



Climate Fest 'Sponge City' talk in Galway City Centre.

people. They care passionately about the world around them and the climate and biodiversity emergencies we face. This was evident during the Fridays for Future movement and in the Youth Climate Assemblies organised by SAUTI Youth here in Galway.

The younger generations with this passion are the future and they have a much keener sense of sustainability than my generation ever had. Climate action is more embedded in them and their decision-making, and from speaking to academics in the local universities, this knowledge and drive for sustainable solutions is becoming much more evident.

In saying that, I believe many young people feel let down by adults and the perceived lack of urgency which accompanies climate action, and I would agree with them. I have been studying climate change since the late 1990s and only now do the local authorities have climate action plans and teams in place. It's better late than never but we have a tough struggle to catch up.

CC: In September 2024, Galway City Council allocated €560,242 to 19 Community Climate Action Projects. These initiatives are great opportunities to engage local and broader communities in climate-friendly projects. Can you highlight a few exciting developments completed or on the horizon?

TM: All of the 19 projects originally awarded the Community Climate Action Fund are worthy of a mention and it has been a privilege to work with so many inspirational and engaged community groups. Under Strand 1 of this Fund, around €445,000 was allocated to 15 community groups in Galway City. Under Strand 1a, a further €114,000 was allocated for cross-border shared-island projects to four climate action projects involving two community groups in Galway City and two in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

Many of the projects are ongoing but there are some completed highlights. The 1st Port of Galway Sea Scouts have just completed Ireland's first ever off-grid Scout ►

... it's evident how innate a love for nature and the environment is for young people. They care passionately about the world around them and the climate and biodiversity emergencies which we face.



Climate Fest event and climate talk in Galway City Centre.

Den, with solar panels and a battery. They are also planting grass and native bushes and trees for potential camping in the future, so we are very excited about this!

Other exciting projects are Westside Resource Centre, which is installing a large PV Photo Voltaic (solar panels) system right in the heart of the Decarbonisation Zone, and Café Link, which has bought an electric cargo bike for food deliveries and is overhauling their recycling and reuse systems.

As a Fermanagh man, I was able to use my connections to link in two organisations in Fermanagh and two in Galway City for the cross-border part of the Fund and strengthen the shared connections we have on the island. An example of these connections is Tuath of Terryland Forest Park in Galway and Friends of Little Woods in Fermanagh with their 'Nature without Borders' project – both are doing amazing work in nature conservation and visited each other to learn and share knowledge.

CC: University of Galway, Galway City Council, and PorterShed came together to host the 2024 Galway City Climathon. Can you discuss

your participation and role in this event, and how the occasion benefitted Galway as a city of the future?

TM: I was proud to be invited to represent Galway City Council at the 2024 Galway City Climathon. This was my first Climathon and I was blown away by the ideas that the students came up with, including solutions to our city's problems in transport, food waste, energy and biodiversity. Once the students had developed their project ideas, they would pitch it to myself and my two fellow judges. My role was really to bring expertise from the Council, having a working knowledge of many existing and new projects. I could ask the pertinent questions and throw the odd curveball into the mix! Overall, I feel the Climathon is a wonderful opportunity for the students to share and develop innovative ideas, actions and solutions to tackle local urban challenges in Galway City.

CC: Galway City Council launched a new climate festival in September 2024. Titled 'Climate Inspirations – Communities in Action', it aims to harness Galway's creative energy and deliver on objectives in the

Celebrating the best of Galway – the arts, music, and creative culture – and using this to promote climate action makes people a lot more responsive than just saying 'Here's the science, now take action!'

recently adopted Action Plan. What community-forward takeaways arose from this celebration?

TM: The 2024 climate festival was the first of its kind organised by a local authority in Ireland. 'Climate Inspirations – Communities in Action' is an innovative, creative, collaborative festival which aims to change the narrative around climate action to a message of positivity. During the festival people enjoyed climate talks, street theatre, live music, comedy, a féasta (feast) for 150 people, and a 'playful street' and second-hand market on Middle Street – fun for the whole community!

Post-festival surveys show that 83% of respondents rated the overall experience excellent or good and a fantastic 75% were



Climate Fest street activity in Galway City Centre, Middle Street.

inspired to take sustainable action. One of the key takeaways is using the arts and creativity to get the message out that climate action is a positive for individuals, families and communities.

Celebrating the best of Galway – the arts, music, and creative culture – and using this to promote climate action makes people a lot more responsive than just saying ‘Here’s the science, now take action’. This new approach is really working, and we want to build on the festival’s success for an even better one in 2025.

CC: Lastly, Galway City and University of Galway have the benefit of a diverse, engaged, and passionate community. In your opinion, what are some core projects that have successfully been – or should crucially be – leveraged between the University and Galway City Council?

TM: The ties between the two organisations are stronger than ever, particularly between the Climate Action Team and various departments in the University. An incredibly successful partnership has been the Grattan Beach Sand Dune Restoration project between the

For successful climate action, and decarbonisation of the city by 2050, we need all sectors of Galway to work together, and University of Galway is a massive part of this.

Geography Department, the City Biodiversity Officer and Parks Team, and the Climate Action Team. Led out by Dr Kevin Lynch, it’s an example of how nature-based solutions work. This project aimed to reduce the amount of sand blowing up onto Grattan Road and buffer the impact of recent storms.

Another brilliant example is the NetZeroCities project, a collaboration between Galway City Council, the Engineering Building Department, the NWRA, Atlantic Technological University Galway, and a local Sustainable Energy Community.

The aim is to accelerate retrofitting in the private sector by identifying and removing barriers, increasing the number of trained people in the community, and helping people with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland’s grant process.

We really need to keep tapping into the expertise of both Universities. We hope to see these partnerships coming to the fore with sustainable energy projects including work on waterways, climate adaptation in the form of flood defence, and nature-based solutions and biodiversity projects to create greener spaces for all Galwegians. For successful climate action, and decarbonisation of the city by 2050, we need all sectors of Galway to work together, and University of Galway is a massive part of this.



Tiarnan McCusker holds the title of Galway City Council’s Community Climate Action Officer since October 2023. Tiarnan has extensive experience working with children and young people taking positive action for the environment, both as a Green-Schools Travel Officer and an Environmental Awareness Officer in Galway City council.

Media Regulation: Working Towards Online Safety, Cultural Inclusivity, and Independent Voices

A journalist at heart: Upholding integrity, protecting Irish-language culture, and promoting inclusivity through media regulation.

Rónán Ó Domhnaill BA 1997,
Media Development Commissioner, Coimisiún na Meán
An Coimisinéir Teanga (2014–2023)

Rónán Ó Domhnaill gave *Cois Coiribe* an insight into his role in combatting mis/disinformation, the vital importance of independent journalism, and working with the European Commission in the area of online safety. He explains his positive view of how traditional and digital media can work together, and of the strong role regulation can play in protecting truth, restoring trust in media, and promoting cultural inclusivity. Read on for a fascinating journey through the worlds of media, regulation and Irish-language culture.

Cois Coiribe (CC): Can you tell us about yourself, including your journey from University of Galway student to Media Development Commissioner at Coimisiún na Meán?

Rónán Ó Domhnaill (RÓD): From 1994 to 1999, I attended University of Galway – University College Galway (UCG), as it was then known – and earned a BA in English, Sociology & Politics. When I reflect on my time at University of Galway, joining the Cumann Dramaíochta, an Irish language Drama Society, had a significant impact. I spent a lot of time there with my friends, attending different festivals, and acting in plays. I really enjoyed my experience in the English, Sociology & Politics programme. I also pursued an MA in Philosophy (Irish studies) but ultimately ended up taking on an immediate role at TG4 as a journalist for their news service.

As a part of that position, a year later I relocated to Dublin and worked as *Gaeilge* for the *Nuacht* Newsroom in RTÉ and TG4. In 2004, I transitioned to English reporting for the Political Unit, then in 2006 I took on a post as a political

correspondent, again working with *Nuacht*, this time in Leinster House, where I stayed for eight years, up until 2014.

It was my dream job; I always wanted to be a political journalist. I have many great memories in Leinster House; however, I also remember the troubling times. When the recession hit in 2008, the International Monetary Fund came to town, and from up close, I could see the effect it had on the public but equally on many politicians. The pressure was immense, and at times difficult to witness. That being said, there were some incredibly exciting times, like travelling with various *Taoisí* to different countries, visiting places I wouldn't normally have had the chance to see. Being present when key decisions were being announced was a privilege as a journalist. Journalism is a noble profession – having the opportunity to witness significant events around the world and report on them is a very important function.

At the end of this run, in 2014, I was delighted to be appointed as the Language Commissioner/An Coimisinéir Teanga. This was a

completely new challenge, but I was ready for it. It was a time of significant growth, where I developed new skills, embraced new ways of working, and honed my leadership and management skills.

Most recently, in 2023, Coimisiún na Meán was established. With my strong passion for media and media development, I saw the advertisement for the role of Media Development Commissioner, Coimisiún na Meán, and I immediately seized this opportunity. ►

Journalism is a noble profession – having the opportunity to witness significant events around the world and report on them is a very important function.





Developing and publishing a Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Strategy is part of a long-standing and ongoing engagement of Coimisiún na Meán in the promotion of gender, equality, diversity and inclusion in the sector and further activities will follow in 2025 and beyond.

The role included elements of the Irish language, which I felt perfectly merged my previous experiences as a journalist and as An Coimisinéir Teanga. Now, two years on, it's busy but immensely rewarding, and I'm thoroughly enjoying the challenge.

CC: What are Coimisiún na Meán's key priorities when developing and regulating Ireland's media landscape, particularly with the rise of digital platforms and AI-driven content?

RÓD: Coimisiún na Meán (CnaM) is a diverse and dynamic organisation, dedicated to online safety in Ireland and in Europe, and the regulation, development, and funding of media in Ireland. My primary responsibility is to oversee media funding and development, which includes managing the Sound & Vision Scheme, in which 7% of the licence fee is used to fund and/or subsidise programmes that might not otherwise be produced. This allotment is a continuation of a fund that was set up as part of the Broadcasting Act 2009, run by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, with an estimated annual value of €20 million. More broadly, 25% of this fund is allocated annually to Irish language programming. The funding supports the aim of

providing diversity in content and ensuring that programmes reflect the full spectrum of our society. It helps create a pluralistic view of who we are, catering to all sections of society, and ensuring that programmes are available across various platforms.

CnaM also provides a regulatory role, overseeing broadcasting, commercial radio, community radio, public service broadcasters, and public service content providers. They must all be regulated and monitored to ensure compliance, and this responsibility is a key part of the organisation's operations. What's interesting is that, on one hand, we're funding projects, and on the other hand, we're responsible for ensuring compliance and regulation. This dual role offers a broad scope but requires clear management and delineation to ensure the organisation operates effectively.

In addition, we have a significant role in regulating online safety in Ireland and within a broader European context. This is a very important part of CnaM, and it demonstrates how diverse the work is. With the rise of digital platforms, we have an Online Safety Code in Ireland that online platforms and organisations are expected to adhere to. We are also

central to the enforcement of the Digital Services Act, which is the European Union's efforts to legislate amid the rise of social media and digital platforms.

An interesting aspect from an Irish perspective is that there are 20+ large online platforms in Europe, each with around 45 million monthly users. It is estimated that 13 of these platforms are headquartered in Ireland. Because the Digital Services Act operates on what's called the 'country of origin' principle, a significant portion of the regulation for these platforms falls under CnaM's remit, in conjunction with the European Commission. This is a major and vast responsibility. What excites me about my role is that I am one of five commissioners, and we work through a collective decision-making process. Understanding that all areas of CnaM are interconnected allows us to make well-informed and effective decisions.

CC: Before joining Coimisiún na Meán, you were Ireland's Language Commissioner/An Coimisinéir Teanga. How does the Commission work to promote Irish language media and ensure linguistic diversity in broadcasting?

RÓD: There are many views and approaches when it comes to ensuring linguistic diversity in broadcasting. As mentioned, 25% of funding from the Sound & Vision Scheme is allocated directly to Irish language programming. Alongside establishing codes and regulations in this area, development and promotional work are equally important. Take for example the Sponsorship Scheme and the Sector Learning & Development Scheme: we support organisations such as Oireachtas na Gaeilge for their annual journalism awards, and we also provide training for journalists focused on Irish-language media.

What's important here is recognising the role of Irish language media as central to Irish society. As Irish is our first official language, I believe it's essential we support a healthy and thriving Irish-language media landscape in Ireland. One of the key recommendations in the *Future of Media Commission* report, published three years ago, was to undertake a comprehensive review of the use of Irish in the media landscape. This is under my remit as Media Development Commissioner, and the review is currently underway, with an expected delivery by the end of 2025.

The aim of the review is to assess where the industry currently stands, understand the broader landscape, and determine supports and developments needed in the coming years to ensure it thrives and continues to evolve. It's worth noting, and from my own perspective and experience, Irish language media has made great strides, with TG4 being a notable example – a channel that didn't exist when I was a child. The most important thing now is ensuring it continues to grow and develop. In a rapidly changing media landscape, standing still means moving backward, so we need to keep progressing and adapting to this immediate landscape.

Thankfully, the Irish-language media sector isn't stagnant; it's moving forward. In our licensing area, where we oversee commercial radio licences, we require commitment in all new contracts that any recommendations from the Irish

language review will form part of their services in the future.

We have also seen an increase in the amount of Irish content on RTÉ, which we at CnaM see as a positive aspect for the Irish media landscape. While it's important that we have a dedicated Irish language station, it's equally important that the Irish language is heard across the broader media spectrum.

CC: With the prevalence of streaming services and on-demand content, how do you see the future of traditional broadcasting in Ireland?

I think this blend of traditional and digital media, underpinned by strong journalistic standards, can be a very healthy development.

RÓD: I find this question interesting, this idea of traditional media versus new media. The implications of this shift are fascinating. Take RTÉ's strategy, for example – they are focusing heavily on moving into a digital-first sphere, with a strong emphasis on the RTÉ Player in the coming years. I think it's very much going to be about traditional media upholding and building upon their solid foundations in areas like standards, trust, fact-checking, independent journalism, and ensuring that rich, high-quality, and important work is available on whatever platform people are on. Whether it's via a traditional broadcasting platform, like RTÉ One, or an online platform, like TikTok, it is vital that content is produced in line with rules and regulations, ensuring independence and impartiality. I think this blend of traditional and digital media, underpinned by strong journalistic standards, can be a very healthy development.

CC: Coimisiún na Meán recently awarded €8.6m of funding to broadcasters and independent producers under the Sound & Vision Scheme. What additional strategies has Coimisiún na Meán put in place to support independent journalism in Ireland?

RÓD: We have a number of strategies in place to support the media landscape. For example, when it comes to traditional local media, such as local newspapers and print media, I think it's important that agencies like CnaM exist. As society continues to grapple with the issues of disinformation and misinformation, government support for journalism is essential to protect democracy. This need for funding has been fully recognised in the *Future of Media Commission* report. I don't think it's tenable to expect the industry to survive without any support.

The *Future of Media Commission* report acknowledged this and led to the introduction of new schemes, such as a Local Democracy Journalism Scheme and a District and Circuit Court Reporting Scheme, both coming on stream this year for the first time. This also marks the first time that CnaM has been involved in funding and developing news in Ireland. These are quite important schemes, with a value of €6 million in 2025, and we expect this to rise to around €10 million in 2026, including a scheme for the digital transformation of the industry.

As society continues to grapple with the issues of disinformation and misinformation, government support for journalism is essential to protect democracy.

CC: As you know, public trust in media is a key issue worldwide. How do you see Irish media ensuring credibility, diversity, and impartiality to combat misinformation?

RÓD: Misinformation and disinformation are a challenge for journalism; however, there are effective tools to help tackle them. I wouldn't be overly pessimistic about the situation, and I'm encouraged by the ongoing efforts that are underway to combat disinformation. There is a growing recognition that it's an issue that must be addressed, and one approach – though not the only one – is to flood the market with fact-checked, independently verified, and eyewitness-based information. ►



Coimisiún na Meán supporting sustainable media in Ireland (2024).

The best definition of journalism I've heard is: 'I was there. This is what I saw.'

While this is a simplistic view, it encapsulates the core of journalism. By supporting journalism through various schemes, insisting on high standards, and enforcing regulations, we ensure that journalists are well-trained and that their material is properly fact-checked. This helps saturate the market with reliable content. However, we also need to focus on media literacy, and we have various initiatives in place to promote this. One of our projects is an initiative in schools; you can read more about this on our website at www.cnam.ie

I think disinformation is something we shouldn't fear but rather acknowledge as part of the environment in which we operate. It's a challenge that we must confront head-on. I believe that there is a growing recognition that self-regulation hasn't been effective, and that regulation is needed. CnaM is committed to ensuring that the media landscape in Ireland remains pluralistic, offering a wide range of options and viewpoints based on facts, underpinned by solid regulations and rules.

At CnaM, our Online Safety Code and the Digital Services Act recognise that regulation is central to combatting disinformation. Misinformation and disinformation are a challenge for journalism; however, there are effective tools to tackle them, and the legislation supports this.

In this rapidly changing and evolving regulatory landscape, the challenge for CnaM is to remain adaptable and ready to respond to change. We are a relatively young agency – just two years in the making – and already we have established supervisory, investigatory, and compliance teams, all of which will have impact on this industry. It's not just happening from an Irish perspective, but within a broader European context, providing crucial support.

CC: You served as Ireland's Language Commissioner, and you also played a key role in strengthening the Official Languages Act. What are the biggest obstacles to increasing Irish-language media output? How can they be addressed?

RÓD: As Media Development Commissioner, the development of Irish-language media falls under my

remit. I think that one of the key challenges is an understanding across society about the role and purpose of Irish language media. It's multifaceted, and I believe what is produced in the Irish language should be of just as high quality – if not higher – than anything produced in English. Ireland has a strong reputation for high-quality production, and that is crucial when measuring success.

However, we must be careful about how we define or measure success and avoid comparing Irish-language media to English-language media based purely on viewership or listenership numbers. While the English-speaking audience is inclusive of everyone in Ireland, the Irish-speaking audience is relatively small, with an estimated 70,000 daily speakers outside the education system.

When evaluating success, it's important to look at factors like cultural relevance, plurality, diversity, pride, and uniqueness – essentially, how well Irish-language media reflects who we are as people and recognises the status of Irish as the first official language. This also includes education of children and fostering a deeper



Coimisiún na Meán supporting journalism in Ireland.

connection with our heritage. The sense that success in Irish language media is about more than just metrics – it's about cultural impact.

CC: Final question: if you could implement one major change in Ireland's media landscape, what would it be and why?

RÓD: The media landscape is vast and diverse. It spans everything from online platforms to local and community radio, with contributors ranging from volunteers who've been at it for 40 or 50 years to paid professionals working in various roles and positions. With something so broad and interconnected, no single change can drastically change the industry. Everything is interlinked.

I think ongoing investment, understanding, and the continued development of the role of media is important. There are so many different areas that, when brought together, can support this. It's too complex an issue to pinpoint one major change. Instead, it's about linking all aspects to create a more rounded approach, which is already happening.

When evaluating success [of Irish-language media], it's important to look at factors like cultural relevance, plurality, diversity, pride, and uniqueness – essentially, how well Irish-language media reflects who we are as people.

We live in a diverse society, and as broadcasting becomes easier and more accessible, there is less of an entry barrier to reach audiences online. It's important that all voices are heard, ensuring we remain an open, democratic society that welcomes people and cultures. It's my opinion that this inclusivity should extend beyond just broadcasting and the media landscape – it's something that should be embraced across all aspects of society.



Rónán Ó Domhnaill is from An Cheathrú Rua in the Connemara Gaeltacht and is the Commissioner for Media Development with the regulatory and media promotion body Coimisiún na Meán since its establishment in 2023. He held the position of Official Languages Commissioner from 2014 – 2023. Prior to this, Rónán spent 16 years as a journalist, political correspondent, and political news presenter with RTÉ, providing reports for Nuacht TG4 and RTÉ News.

As the Commissioner for Media Development, Rónán oversees funding initiatives for the media sector in Ireland, sectoral development and training for the industry and media literacy outreach. He is also responsible for implementing many of the recommendations in the Future of Media Commission Report, including a Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy for the media sector in Ireland, a comprehensive Review of the provision of Irish language in media in Ireland, a Sports Broadcasting Policy, North South media initiatives and the roll out of a carbon calculator for the media.

As Official Languages Commissioner, he advocated for strengthening language legislation in Ireland and expressed to the government, political parties, Oireachtas committees, and various other stakeholders the need for strong legislation. The amended Official Languages Act, passed in December 2021, ensures a significant increase in language rights for the public and places comprehensive obligations on public bodies regarding the provision of state services in Irish.

Rónán was formerly chairperson of the Irish Ombudsman Forum, the Irish representative on the Executive Board of the Ombudsman Association, and chair of the International Association of Language Commissioners. In addition to his BA from University of Galway, Rónán holds an MA in Leadership & Strategy and a Professional Diploma in Corporate Governance from the Institute of Public Administration.

The Irish Centre For Human Rights: A Beacon for Human Rights

Prof Siobhán Mullally,
Director of the Irish Centre
for Human Rights (ICHR),
University of Galway

Prof Siobhán Mullally is Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights (ICHR) at University of Galway. She also holds the role of UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Recognising inequality from a young age, she sought solutions through her research and work across the globe in contexts of conflict and injustice. As the Irish Centre for Human Rights celebrates its 25th birthday, Siobhán takes *Cois Coiribe* to the heart of the Centre, explaining the real-world impact that human rights researchers have against struggles for justice, in conflict settings, and in dark times. She takes us through her vision for the Centre, its legacy, and its future.

The Irish Centre for Human Rights is one of the world's leading academic institutions dedicated to the study and promotion of human rights.

The Centre offers a wide range of programmes, which began with our inaugural taught Master's programme in International Human Rights Law. Since then, we have grown and introduced new programmes in areas such as Peace Operations, International Criminal Law, International Migration and Refugee Law and Policy and, most recently, the groundbreaking Master's programmes in Transitional Justice, Conflict and Human Rights, and in Gender and Human Rights: Law and Policy.

Our BA in Human Rights offers a unique experience. Led by Dr Anita Ferrara, it is an interdisciplinary programme which allows for the study of human rights law alongside politics, philosophy, and languages. Our newest Master's programmes reflect growing expertise in the Centre alongside emerging global challenges.

The LLM in Transitional Justice Conflict and Human Rights, led by Dr Ferrara, builds on her specialism in post-conflict societies, particularly in Latin America and in Africa. The LLM in Gender and

Human Rights: Law and Policy is the first of its kind in Ireland or the UK, and is led by Professor Roja Fazaeli, a global expert on Gender, Religion, Islam and Human Rights. Core teaching by Dr Ekaterina Yahyaoui Krivenko on Gender and Human Rights provides rigorous reflections on how gender shapes law and policy. These programmes, reflecting a core area of teaching and research interest among staff and students, strengthen the University's broader commitment to gender equality and human rights.

Students who enrol in an ICHR programme are highly motivated, often arriving with a strong sense of purpose and a desire to change the world. I think they are drawn to the way our programmes equip them to explore human rights law in broader political, ethical, and cultural contexts, and in societies in transition. We have secured student placements with anti-torture organisations and UN agencies and the UN Human Rights Council Special Procedures in Geneva, anti-death penalty organisations in London, refugee and migrant rights groups in Malta and Italy; in the USA and Canada, as well as in Palestine, Liberia, Uganda, Colombia, and Chile, India and Pakistan. These provide students with invaluable practical experience in human rights lawyering.

Most recently, we launched the BCL Law and Human Rights programme, led by Dr Maeve O'Rourke, – a full law degree that incorporates a specialism in international and European human rights law. It also emphasises lawyering, presentation and research skills, and practical legal training, providing a strong foundation for careers in human rights advocacy, litigation, and policy. The programme reflects our commitment to prepare students not just academically, but practically and ethically, for impactful work in human rights law and policy. ►

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Starting out and growing

The ICHR was first established as a Centre for the Study of Human Rights by Professor Kevin Boyle, a leading civil rights lawyer from Northern Ireland, who contributed internationally to the promotion of minority rights and freedom of expression in particular. In 2000, the Centre was formally established in its dedicated historic building with the appointment of Professor William Schabas, a world-renowned expert in International Criminal Law. This year, we will host our 25th Annual Summer School on the International Criminal Court. This is a flagship event, led by Professor Shane Darcy, that reflects our leadership in this field and brings Judges of the ICC, and other international courts and tribunals, leading international lawyers, and human rights advocates to Galway each year.

Our community of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers continues to grow. We have developed a vibrant community of PhD researchers, many of whom work in senior academic and policy institutions globally.

Where the Centre shines is in its deep commitment to policy engagement and practice. We draw on our research and teaching to engage with the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, Inter-American and African human rights bodies, and the European Union. We also work closely with grassroots community organisations to promote human rights and social justice.

The International Human Rights Law Clinic, led by Dr Maeve O'Rourke, gives students hands-on experience in real-world legal and advocacy work. Focusing on institutional abuse and human rights archives, in partnership with the National Archives, her work shapes new understandings and policies around historical justice in Ireland. Professor Shane Darcy and Professor Ray Murphy have spearheaded work involving the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine, and engagement with Palestinian Universities, and led initiatives engaging directly with the International Criminal Court, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, and

other courts and tribunals. Professor Darcy has secured funding from Research Ireland to develop partnerships with Palestinian universities, focusing on capacity-building and supporting academic institutions in the region. This builds on a long-standing body of research focused on international law in Palestine, including an ICHR co-authored UN report, marking a major contribution to international legal discourse.

In the area of asylum, refugee, and migration law, Dr Ciara Smyth and I have developed a vibrant research cluster on contemporary issues addressing the rights of migrants and refugees, and an annual symposium is hosted at the University of Galway, jointly with the Immigration, Asylum, and Citizenship Bar Association of the Bar of Ireland. This provides a forum for examining how International and European law and policy are implemented in Ireland.

Our mentioned pioneering Human Rights Law Clinic, led by Dr Maeve O'Rourke, engages with community organisations locally and globally, working on diverse issues such as the human rights of survivors of Mother and Baby homes, climate justice, fracking, and asylum-seeking children's rights.

A diverse and vibrant student body

One attractive aspect of the Centre is our specialist seminar-based training in an interactive, discussion-led format. We recognise that many students bring substantial professional experience to the classroom. In fact, we currently have enrolled students who have worked in conflict and post-conflict settings, such as in northeast Syria, Colombia, and South Sudan. We also have graduate students who are leading peace operations and humanitarian programmes, who are UN officials, senior members of the judiciary, practising lawyers, senior policy makers, and human rights defenders. We have welcomed judges from Zambia and Rwanda, defence lawyers and prosecutors

They bring as much to the classroom as the lecturers themselves, creating a vibrant and intellectually dynamic atmosphere.

from Namibia, South Sudan, and Nigeria, and prominent civil society and human rights activists involved in refugee law and climate justice in Uganda, Brazil, India, and the USA.

They bring as much to the classroom as the lecturers themselves, creating a vibrant and intellectually dynamic atmosphere.

Recently, a former Master's in International Human Rights Law student returned to study migration and refugee law, after working for years in post-conflict settings. This speaks to the changing landscape of human rights and the global challenges of today. Students also want to develop or expand into emerging areas, such as Business and Human Rights, Islam and Gender, or Climate Justice. A unique aspect of our programmes is the regular involvement of leading international practitioners and scholars. Here at the Centre, we pride ourselves on our diverse international and experienced student community.

Unique access to international institutions

Each year, ICHR students have the opportunity to travel to The Hague – the 'City of International Law' – to visit International Criminal Courts and the International Court of Justice. Thanks mainly to our strong alumni network and adjunct professors, students gain unparalleled access to legal professionals in these courts, including access to court chambers and behind-the-scenes discussions that offer rare, unique insights and valuable perspectives.

Our students also get to travel to Geneva to attend sessions of the UN Human Rights Council. As part of my role as UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, students

have accompanied me to interactive dialogues with Member States in Geneva and New York, gaining first-hand experience of high-level diplomacy and policy debate. They have also accompanied the UN Special Rapporteur in Palestine, observing formal sessions and high-level meetings within the Human Rights Council chamber. Our programme of visiting speakers has brought high-level UN officials to Galway, in person and virtually, to speak directly to our students and address their questions. Our outstanding adjunct professors are leading practitioners in their field and generously give their time to our students and staff.

This level of access is difficult to replicate elsewhere, and you can't put a price on it in terms of its value to our students' training and experience. It reflects not only the strength of our international networks, but also Ireland's broader global reputation as a nation deeply committed to human rights, advocacy, and multilateral diplomacy and politics. I think Galway itself plays a meaningful role in this reputation, home to former President Mary Robinson, and current President Michael D. Higgins. The Centre is proud to be part of that tradition.

A Developing Passion For Human Rights

My interest in social justice and human rights stems from my own experiences of growing up in Ireland during a time when gender equality, women's rights, reproductive rights, and LGBT rights were not respected; a time when socio-economic background limited opportunities for progression to higher education and in the legal profession. As a young woman, I experienced first-hand the impact of discrimination and oppression.

An early experience in my international work was at Peshawar on the Afghan border in Pakistan, host to almost a million Afghan refugees. The region was marked by turmoil and conflict in Afghanistan, and in Pakistan, particularly around issues of gender equality, minority rights, and human rights activism. I was really inspired

My interest in social justice and human rights stems from my own experiences of growing up in Ireland during a time when gender equality, women's rights, reproductive rights, and LGBT rights were not respected.

by the activists and human rights leaders I worked with, particularly the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, the many courageous human rights lawyers involved, as well as Afghan refugees themselves.

An understanding of exile

Coming from a family of migrant workers, I had an appreciation of what it meant to be in exile. This background shaped my response when I returned to Ireland, at a time when the country was beginning to receive refugees and migrants for the first time. I became involved in setting up NASC in Cork – the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre – which continues to provide vital legal support services to migrants and refugees. As Chairperson of the Irish Refugee Council at a time when Ireland was changing, I saw the consequences of failing to support those seeking asylum and international protection, often separated from families and loved ones.

Working in conflict settings

During my career, I worked in several conflict settings, including Timor-Leste and post-war Kosovo. In both places, I witnessed the complexities of rebuilding societies after violence and the importance of law and policy.

Even as a student, I was active in solidarity movements and worked closely with organisations in Northern Ireland, including as a parades observer with the Committee on Administration of

Justice, where I saw the deep impact of sectarian hatred and conflict. Throughout my studies and academic career, I remained engaged with human rights organisations in Northern Ireland, including as a Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and member of the Joint treaty body on human rights. In many ways, this has consistently informed and shaped my experiences, research, and work.

My research primarily focuses on issues related to gender, forced migration, and refugee protection. More recently, I've investigated issues around the interactions of conflict and human trafficking, in the context of migration and forced displacement. With the Council of Europe, as President of the monitoring body, the Group of Experts on action against trafficking, I undertook official visits to 'hotspots' in Sicily, to the transit zones on the Hungarian and Serbian border – witnessing the detention of Afghan, Iraqi, and Syrian children – to refugee camps in Turkey, and to the camps in Calais, where the images of abandoned 11- and 12-year-old refugee children remain.

UN Special Rapporteur in Colombia, Bangladesh, and South Sudan

As a UN Special Rapporteur, one of the most tangible aspects of the work – something that resonates with many people – is conducting official country visits. For example, during a mission to Colombia, I focused on the Darien Gap region, a dangerous route for refugees and migrants travelling toward Panama and ultimately the United States. We were focusing on the heightened risks of human trafficking faced by refugees and migrants. My background in gender and child rights research was important in identifying key gaps in protection services and highlighting the urgent need to expand safe migration routes to strengthen refugee protection mechanisms for vulnerable populations moving through this region.

I also undertook an official visit to Bangladesh, which included a visit to Cox's Bazar, the largest refugee camp

We conducted the first study of its kind on child trafficking and grave violations against children in armed conflict settings. One of my priorities was to reform reporting processes to look at patterns of child trafficking in conflict situations as a step toward more robust, informed decision-making.

in the world. This area is home to nearly two million Rohingya refugees. Once again, my research background on sexual and gender-based violence, as well as on the specific vulnerabilities of child migrants and refugees, was important in reporting on the protection risks on the ground. I helped shape the findings and recommendations of the report, which was presented to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, as was the Colombia report.

My official visit to South Sudan was the first by a UN Special Procedures mandate holder in 13 years. The focus there was on the rights of refugees and children, with particular attention to high rates of sexual and gender-based violence. As with previous missions, my background in these areas was important, both in securing the visit and reporting the findings to the UN.

The visit to South Sudan was probably the most difficult I undertook. The levels of sexual violence and extreme poverty endured were difficult to witness. My visit to the Central African Republic engaged the issue of the role of armed groups, including mercenaries, and the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation and use in hostilities. In Liberia and Guinea Bissau, the limited attention given to prevention of child trafficking and to sexual exploitation, particularly of women and girls in post-conflict and transitional societies, was a serious concern. Reports on these official

visits and thematic reports have been presented to the UN General Assembly in New York and to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, with recommendations to Member States to take more effective action to prevent such serious abuses.

As part of these case studies, I worked with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. We conducted the first study of its kind on child trafficking and grave violations against children in armed conflict settings. One of my priorities was to reform reporting processes to look at patterns of child trafficking in conflict situations as a step toward more robust, informed decision-making.

In 2024, I was elected chairperson of the Platform on Refugee Rights, which we launched to strengthen action by UN and regional human rights bodies to protect refugee rights, at a time when the right to seek asylum from persecution globally is under threat.

Focus on trafficking and migrant workers

My case study work brought me to Amnesty International, where I partnered on projects in northeast Syria, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. We looked at patterns of child abduction, specifically risks faced by girls, including sexual exploitation and sexual slavery. We also looked at the often-underreported issue of trafficking of boys, who are frequently not identified as victims.

This work marked the first time Amnesty International formally reported on child trafficking and incorporated it into their responses to the crisis in northeast Syria. We had significant outcomes from this approach, including capacity-building workshops on reporting on child trafficking.

I'll be presenting a report on migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2025. I recently completed consultations across the Asia-Pacific region and am

engaging on the East Africa Gulf migration route, including through the Regional Consultative Process. Like many Irish people, I am the daughter of (now returned) migrant workers, and the granddaughter of a migrant domestic worker, so the protection of migrant workers is something that is close to my heart.

The ICHR's Legacy And Future

When I reflect on legacy, it feels especially important right now. We are currently witnessing how fragile the commitment to international justice and human rights protections really is. We can't assume continual progress. We are seeing human rights programmes shut down, lawyers targeted, and human rights defenders silenced. Now, more than ever, the role of education is vital.

We have been talking with students and colleagues about preserving a space for education, where people can learn and openly discuss issues of injustice and human rights violations. It is also important that we examine the development of the international legal system, including how it has evolved and where it falls short.

For me, education is central to legacy: that we teach, that we learn together. It's crucial that we continue to build and strengthen the foundation of human rights protections for future generations.

Our students, alumni, and the wider research community at the Centre are committed to human rights, and as a community we are well-equipped and prepared to lead in this field. It is important to us that our students graduate with the strongest possible foundation and with the right skills, provided by rigorous academic training and practical preparation. In our modern environment, we place high importance on educating students about digital safety, personal security and privacy, and strategies to protect themselves from vicarious trauma. We also prepare them to navigate threats and complexities they may encounter in human rights work.



The Irish Centre for Human Rights offers a summer school programme on the International Criminal Court and jointly runs a summer programme with the New England School of Law.

For me, education is central to legacy: that we teach, that we learn together. It's crucial that we continue to build and strengthen the foundation of human rights protections for future generations.

Our goal is to ensure that the Irish Centre for Human Rights is recognised globally as a leading space for education, research, and dialogue – a place where students can exchange ideas and develop the knowledge and skills they need to further their career in their chosen field.

Professor Siobhán Mullally, MRIA
Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights.

Siobhán Mullally is Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights. She is the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, reporting both to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. She is an Honorary Professor at the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queens University Belfast. She is also a Distinguished visiting Professor at Symbiosis Law School, Pune and a member of the High Council of the European University Institute, Florence.

From 2017-19, Professor Mullally was the President of the Council of Europe treaty monitoring body, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking (GRETA), and previously served as 1st Vice-President (2015-17 and Member (2013-19). She was a

Commissioner with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2014-19) and a member of the Joint Treaty body of the Northern Irish Human Rights Commission and the Irish Human Rights Commission (created by the Good Friday Agreement). She is a member of the National Group of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, The Hague, and was the founding Joint Editor-in-Chief of the Irish Yearbook of International Law (2006-20), published by Hart Bloomsbury, Oxford.

She is a member of the Department of Foreign Affairs Standing Committee on Human Rights and of the Expert Advisory Panel on Ireland's membership of the UN Security Council. In 2019, she was appointed to the Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee of An Garda Síochána (Police service). She previously served as a member of the Department of Justice and Equality Research Advisory Group, as Chairperson of the Irish Refugee Council and as a member of the board of NASC, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre.

The Irish Centre for Human Rights Blog

The Irish Centre for Human Rights Blog offers timely analysis and commentary on critical global human rights issues, serving as a vital platform for insightful debate and reflections.

As the Irish Centre for Human Rights (ICHR) marks 25 years of programmes this year, the ICHR blog reflects on the Centre's ongoing commitment to advance human rights education and social justice worldwide. With graduates actively engaged at the frontline of human rights in conflict situations – working alongside international organisations, governmental departments, NGOs, and the United Nations – this blog provides a platform for rigorous and accessible discourse on human rights scholarship and practice.

Our time is rife with pressing human rights challenges, including the ongoing assault and genocide on Gaza, Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, widespread atrocities in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, repression of LGBTQ+ rights in Hungary, and more. While upholding the ideals of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the blog seeks to foster critical thinking and encourage dialogue and action in the face of this increasingly volatile and violent global landscape.

The blog is edited by Dr Pearce Clancy and Dr Joel Hanisek, and it covers a wide range of human rights topics. Submissions are welcome from academics, students, and practitioners in international law and human rights, broadly defined. Contributions are typically 1500 words in length and can be sent directly to the editors at ichrgalwayblog@gmail.com.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS PODCAST



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Why not tune in?

Check out our *Cois Coiribe* Podcast collaboration.

In this two-part *Cois Coiribe* podcast, Dr Ciara Smyth, University of Galway and barrister and co-host of the Fifth Court podcast, Peter Leonard speak with Tom O'Malley—retired law lecturer from University of Galway, Senior Counsel, and member of the Inner Bar of Ireland. They explore his distinguished career, covering courtroom stories, legal reform, and his global perspective on justice.



Discover and Subscribe on:



Dr Fidelma Donlon: Advocating for a More Just and Equal World

Dr Fidelma Donlon,
Registrar at the Kosovo Specialist
Chambers, University of Galway Alumna

The Irish Centre for Human Rights has acted as a foundation for successful careers for law and policy professionals the world over. One such individual is Dr Fidelma Donlon, Registrar at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. In this Cois Coiribe article, we explore her time with the University, and her motivations to become involved in this area of practice.

The legal knowledge I obtained [from ICHR] has helped me design the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, as well as manage the set-up of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers.

Cois Coiribe (CC): Can you tell us about your journey into international law and what inspired you to pursue a career in human rights and transitional justice?

Fidelma Donlon (FD): Growing up, I always had a strong interest in anti-apartheid efforts as well as the civil rights associations of the 1960s, both in the United States and closer to home in Northern Ireland. I was inspired by – and am still inspired by – these movements and their efforts at achieving equality for people. Throughout my university years I was motivated by this idealism, and I developed a keen awareness of human rights and the struggles happening around the world. I decided to study law, hoping to be able to represent people whose rights needed protecting.

After working as a solicitor in Ireland, I had the opportunity to spend a little time in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a post-conflict country where the legal order and the court system had been devastated by war, and where international agencies and civil society were working together to rebuild the rule of law and protect human rights. I was appointed to manage a regional human rights and rule of law office in Mostar,

Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within the space of a few months, this work confirmed my passion for international human rights, academically and practically, and it very much set me on a path for the rest of my career so far.

CC: Your doctoral research at the Irish Centre for Human Rights at University of Galway focused on completion strategies of international tribunals. How did that academic work influence your practical approach in judicial settings?

FD: I acquired a lot of knowledge about the Rules of Procedure and Evidence as well as case law of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Tribunal for Rwanda, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. I also observed the changing attitudes of UN Member States towards the Courts, at various stages throughout their existence. Also, in researching and writing my PhD, I certainly improved my abilities to analyse large volumes of complex information and formulate clear opinions and arguments about topics. The legal knowledge I obtained enabled me to design the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone and manage the set-up of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. ►



We are always anxious to receive applications for internships and positions from graduates who, by virtue of their experience at ICHR, are solid academically and have a foundation and familiarity in the practice of human rights law.

It also enables me to contribute to discussions about the Rules of Procedure and Evidence. My awareness of Member States assists me in my diplomatic work, including fundraising and briefing States.

CC: What role do institutions like our Irish Centre for Human Rights play in shaping the next generation of legal professionals working in international justice?

FD: The ICHR and similar institutions play a huge role in educating highly qualified young people to contribute to International Criminal Justice. The ICHR in particular has a great reputation internationally as a centre of excellence for training legal professionals in this field. I think this starts with a strong faculty and a diverse range of students.

It stems from an approach that gives equal weight to both the theory and the practice of international human rights law, because this is a field that is constantly developing both in theory and jurisprudence, as well as in terms of the institutions and actors working to protect rights and deliver accountability.

ICHR faculty and students regularly visit The Hague, including the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, which is the institution that I manage. We are always anxious to receive applications for internships and positions from graduates who, by virtue of their experience at ICHR, are solid academically and have a foundation in and familiarity with the practice of human rights law.

CC: You've held senior positions in multiple international criminal tribunals. How did your education in the ICHR, and your later experiences in Bosnia and Sierra Leone, inform your approach to justice and court administration?

FD: The ICHR PhD community was fantastic, and the faculty did an excellent job bringing all of us together to hear about and discuss each other's research. The PhD seminars were academically rich and also very social! I learned from other PhD candidates, and our exchanges certainly helped me shape my PhD. From the ICHR, as well as my career spanning many post-conflict countries, I know it's OK if people don't agree with you. What's important is understanding why they don't have the same position as you. Just like a solid PhD seminar discussion, listen to people; you might change your opinion, you might not! Overall, make what you think is the right decision and move forward.

CC: As the first Registrar of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, you oversee the administration and judicial support functions of the court. What does a typical day in your role look like?

FD: A typical day is very dynamic, very busy, and very diverse. The Registry carries out many judicial support services that a Ministry of Justice in a domestic system would provide. So, as the Registrar, I have overall responsibility for managing the detention facility in The Hague, for protecting and supporting witnesses, for overseeing the system of victim participation, for running a legal aid system for indigent defendants, and for operating the court management and language services that support the trials. On top of this, I'm also responsible for ensuring the sound financial management of a biennial budget of €115,739,000 from our funders. This diverse range of work is why I love my job and part of the reason why I feel so privileged to do what I do.

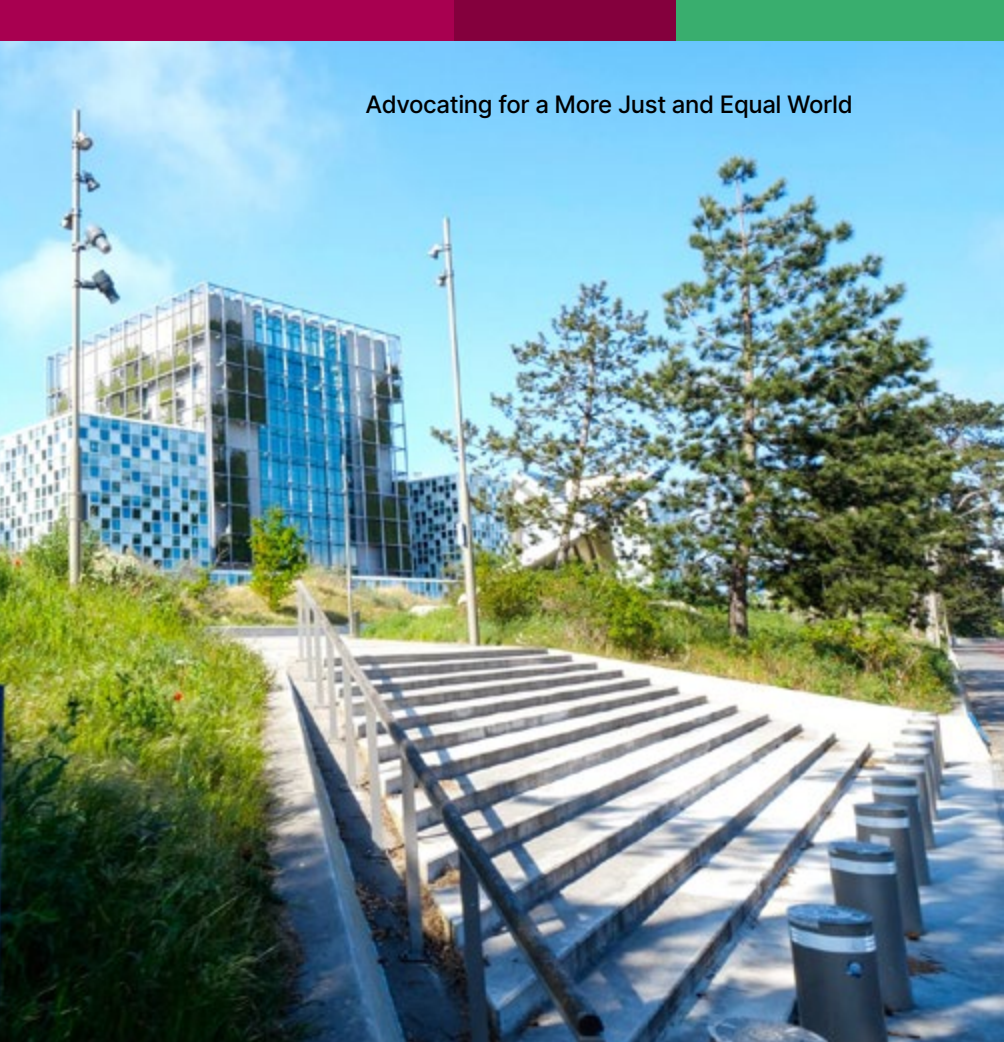
CC: The Specialist Chambers were set up to prosecute serious crimes related to the Kosovo conflict. How does the court support victims and witnesses throughout legal proceedings?

FD: The protection of witnesses has been a central priority of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers since the court's establishment. A history of witness intimidation and influencing in similar cases to those dealt with by the Specialist Chambers was one of the reasons Kosovo and the EU agreed to hold proceedings in a third state. If witnesses are not free to testify without fear or undue influence, there can be no justice.

A dedicated unit here in The Hague has so far ensured the protection and support of almost 200 witnesses who have testified live across four trials. Support is also a very important element here. It's not only about the safety of witnesses, which is of course crucial, but also about having psychologists on hand, for example, to address any risk of re-traumatisation. The court also has a legal mandate to hold people accountable for obstruction of justice, which it implements robustly.

Speaking about the victims, people who suffered as a result of the crimes addressed by the court also have the opportunity to participate in proceedings. They are represented by a Counsel paid for by the court, and their rights as participating victims include notification, acknowledgement, and reparation. We have facilitated the participation of 171 victims so far across four cases, and judges have already issued reparation orders for the victims in three cases.

If witnesses are not free to testify without fear or undue influence, there can be no justice.



CC: How do you see the relationship between academic research and legal practice evolving in the field of international criminal law?

FD: Academic research and legal practice evolve together dynamically and sometimes in ways that might not come to mind at first.

For example, in addition to academic research on jurisprudence, the institutional characteristics of those legal bodies that implement international criminal law is an incredibly important area. What are the mechanisms of accountability out there? How are they established legally, and what are their institutional features? An ad-hoc institution like the Kosovo Specialist Chambers exists to fulfil a specific mandate and naturally comes to a point of completion. But it can also serve as a great model for future accountability mechanisms. Research that concentrates on this is of tremendous use, not only for academics but also for practitioners with the responsibility to establish new mechanisms.

Academic research can also bring independent voices to this kind of analysis. Accountability is a complex matter and institutions that deliver accountability are subject to critiques, sometimes orchestrated by those with specific agendas in the proceedings. The process of academic review can allow for a more neutral assessment of what is working and what is transferable, because we all share the same goal of protecting people's rights and establishing precedents of accountability.

The process of academic review can allow for a more neutral assessment of what is working and what is transferable, because we all share the same goal of protecting people's rights and establishing precedents of accountability.

Dr Fidelma Donlon is a graduate of University College of Dublin and the Law Society of Ireland. She obtained her Doctorate in Law at the Irish Centre for Human Rights at University of Galway. As part of her longstanding career in International Criminal Justice, Dr Donlon has managed the organisational development of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) and the Bosnian War Crimes Chambers, as well as designing the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone. Dr Donlon is the Registrar of the KSC and previously Deputy Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Bosnian War Crimes Chambers.



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From Connemara to New South Wales: A Chat with Consul General Rosie Keane

Rosie Keane,
Consul General, Embassy of Ireland,
Australia, University of Galway Alumna

In this article, *Cois Coiribe* explores University of Galway alumna Rosie Keane's journey from student to Consul General of Ireland in Australia's New South Wales. In the latest Australian census, nearly 10% of Australians identify as having Irish heritage. Irish links to Australia remain strong and seen, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to spotlight Keane's background and impressive career as we get a glimpse into what it means to represent Ireland and Irish citizens abroad.

Cois Coiribe (CC): Can you tell us about your time at University of Galway and how your studies in History, Politics, Sociology, and Business shaped your career? Any experiences or lecturers that had a lasting impact in your diplomatic work?

Rosie Keane (RK): I have nothing but fond memories of my time in University of Galway. Coming from Connemara, where I attended a small secondary school, Galway was the ideal campus for me. It was a safe, friendly, and welcoming space, and I took to it like a duck to water.

Looking back at my academic experience, I can see where the foundations for my diplomatic career were laid. While studying sociology and politics at undergraduate level, I recall lectures with Dr Brendan Flynn, who taught a module on EU politics. His way of teaching was captivating, and his enthusiasm for the subject was infectious. Through this course, I developed a deep fascination and appreciation for the EU project as a whole, including the Council, Parliament, and Commission, which I feel led me on a path which ultimately resulted in my joining the Department of Foreign Affairs

CC: University of Galway is known for its strong academic community – did you find any specific support networks or mentors helpful during your time there?

RK: Once I finished my Bachelor of Arts degree, I decided to undertake a postgraduate course in business studies. This was a huge departure from what I studied previously, and I struggled to get to grips with one of the subjects in particular.

However, the support I got from Professor Sweeney was incredible. With her help, guidance, and endless patience, I was able to overcome and enrich my learning experience, passing the module and learning concepts that I still carry with me.

Another fond memory comes from my early days as a first year. I submitted: an analysis on 'The Prince' by Nicolo Machievelli. My history lecturer at the time was Prof Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, an academic legend on the Galway campus. Prof Ó Tuathaigh was such a fantastic storyteller and really brought history to life in his lectures. The result was that his classes were always well attended. Yet, despite what I can only imagine was a very substantial workload, his feedback on every assignment was extremely considered and very supportive, which I really appreciated as a wide-eyed fresher!

The approach taken by Prof Ó Tuathaigh and Prof Sweeney was consistently applied throughout my years in Galway, and I always found that there was a really supportive network at University of Galway. Having that ready access to the teaching body was very reassuring and helped to build innate confidence in my abilities. ►

Looking back at my academic experience, I can see where the foundations for my diplomatic career were laid.



CC: What led you to transition from the finance sector to working in the Department of Finance and later the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, contributing to conversation on subjects from disarmament to Brexit negotiations?

RK: I worked in the finance section of a large multinational for a number of years, an experience which I continue to draw on as part of my current work in promoting bilateral trade between Ireland and Australia. As with many people, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) had a significant impact on me, not just in relation to job security, but from a more profound perspective, and it led me to take stock of where I was heading both personally and professionally.

Through this assessment, I realised that I wanted to pursue a path which allowed me to combine both my finance skills and my earlier political studies, which is why I joined the Department of Finance in 2013. That same year, we took on the rotating EU Presidency of 2013, one of the most challenging periods in recent EU history, given the urgent need to support the EU's banking and markets infrastructure. This work, though difficult at times, reignited my interest in EU politics, and I relished being at the table (so to speak) to see its functioning first hand. This experience also made me really appreciate the role the civil service play in helping to shape EU legislation, an approach which always seeks to put the citizen and their interests at its core.

In the year 2016, I participated in an open recruitment campaign to join the diplomatic corps and subsequently took up my first role as Deputy Director of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. In late 2017 I had my first posting, to our Embassy in London, where I worked on Brexit. This is one of the aspects I particularly enjoy about Foreign Affairs, its variety. The roles and topics you can work on are incredibly varied, and I think that diversity, including in people, backgrounds and experiences, helps to make the Irish diplomatic corps a very agile and effective force.

CC: What have been some of the key challenges and highlights in your role as Consul General of Ireland in Sydney?

RK: It has been the honour and privilege to serve as Consul General of Ireland in New South Wales (NSW). Ireland and Australia have incredibly close links, and it is estimated that 1 in 10 Australian's have Irish ancestry. This, coupled with the fact that NSW is home to the largest diaspora in Australia, makes for an incredibly busy but fulfilling role.

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As with every role, there are challenges, but I am very lucky to have an incredible team, with a combined total of 30 years' experience. I find this very reassuring when it comes to dealing with serious consular cases. As humans, whenever something goes wrong, our first thoughts will go into problem solving mode. In my career, I have seen that there are times when you cannot 'fix' the issue. While these cases can be upsetting, I know that while I cannot undo what has happened, I can still draw upon my local knowledge and networks to provide as much practical support as I can to the families during difficult times.

In terms of highlights, however, there are so many! Walking in the Sydney St Patrick's Day parade is always such an honour, and it is really moving to see this incredibly busy city come to a standstill and join in with our celebrations.

The FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023 was also a career highlight! Ireland took on the Matilda's in the opening match, and I really thought that my heart would burst with pride when the women came out onto the pitch to the sound of cheers from the thousands of Irish people who travelled to see the

game. This match was (and still is) the most watched sports fixture on Australian TV, and I am so proud that Ireland played such a key role in this watershed moment for women in sport!

CC: How does the Consulate in Sydney support and engage with the Irish community? Are there any recent initiatives or cultural programmes that you're particularly excited about?

RK: We have an incredibly active and diverse community in NSW, which we engage with and support in a myriad of ways.

Once a quarter, the Consulate hosts a meeting of community leaders entitled 'Le Chéile' with representatives from the over 30 community organisations active in NSW. These events have ranged from information sessions on renters' rights to roundtables with visiting Ministers. This initiative has enhanced community connections and facilitated cross-community engagement in what was once a fragmented space.

We also support our community groups via the Emigrant Support Programme. This fund, which has been in operation since 2004, has assisted countless organisations across the globe. I am especially proud that organisations from NSW make up a considerable number of fund recipients and in the last 3 years alone, NSW organisations received almost \$1m dollars in funding. This funding goes to support organisations such as the Irish Support Agency, Sydney Queer Irish and the Irish Family events group. The GAA are also incredibly active in NSW, boasting 9 clubs in the State with 22 teams across each sporting code. Through the global games fund, the Department helps fund the GAA's activities in the state, which also encompasses a significant welfare element.

We are very active on the culture scene too. Irish writing, music, and acting is really having a 'moment' here in Sydney! Through support from Culture Ireland, we are able to play a key role in promoting Irish artists, which have ranged from Claire Keegan at the Sydney Writers Festival (SWF) to Dermot Kennedy at the MISNEACH festival.



Later this year we will see Colm Tobin, Maggie O'Farrell, Ferdia Lennon, and Marian Keyes at the SWF, and there is much excitement brewing in advance of the arrival of the British and Irish lions in June – busy times ahead!

CC: Finally, what's one thing you wish more people knew about Ireland's diplomatic work abroad?

RK: One of the things I am most proud of as an Irish diplomat is our support for the diaspora. I was born in London the daughter of Irish migrants who left the west of Ireland in the 1970's to seek work in the UK. Like the others who went before them, the money they sent back home was a lifeline for many families.

Although times have changed, and Ireland has too, one thing that has remained steadfast is the appreciation the Irish have for their diaspora. As a way of giving back and acknowledging the decades of support our diaspora provided to us, in 2004 the Irish Government established the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP). Since its inception, the ESP has assisted more than 900 organisations in 51 countries with over €250 million in funding.

Irish diplomats the world over understand deeply the importance of the diaspora, and they do an incredible job in supporting them. Ireland really does stand out amongst its peers in terms of our support for our global family. Through this, Ireland's soft power and people power have an outsized impact relative to the country's population size. You need only look at the rivers going green from Chicago to Vilnius in celebration of our national day to see the Irish charm in action!

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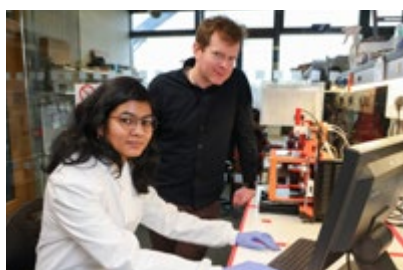
Originally from Connemara in County Galway, Rosie Keane was appointed Consul General of Ireland in Sydney, with accreditation to the State of New South Wales in September 2021. Keane holds a Bachelor of Arts degree (History, Politics and Sociology) and Higher Diploma in Business Studies from University of Galway. She also holds academic qualifications in Law (Institute of Public Administration), Legislative Drafting (The Honourable Society of Kings Inn), Financial Services (University College Dublin), Tax (The Irish Taxation Institute), and Leadership (Oxford University). As Consul General of Ireland, Sydney, Keane works alongside the Consulate team to strengthen Ireland's links with New South Wales, promoting Irish culture, heritage, and interests, whilst also providing services to Irish citizens in the region.

In the News

January



14/01: Dr Finn Krewer appointed inaugural Greally Lectureship in Applied Clinical Data Analytics – a landmark initiative in integrating advanced clinical data analysis with cutting-edge research in artificial intelligence and healthcare.



22/01: Researchers at the School of Engineering and CÚRAM Research Ireland Centre for Medical Devices have developed a way of bioprinting tissues that change shape as a result of cell-generated forces, in the same way that it happens in biological tissues during organ development.



27/01: Professor Alma McCarthy has been appointed Executive Dean at the College of Business, Public Policy and Law.

31/01: A study, jointly first authored by medical students, Rionach Sheerin and Caoimhe Laffey as part of the Health Research Board Summer scholarship programme, reveals that frailty has a greater impact than age on the outcomes of patients being weaned off invasive mechanical ventilation, required by patients with various forms of respiratory failure.

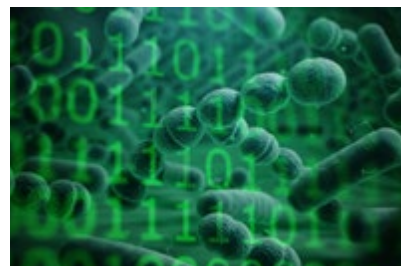
February



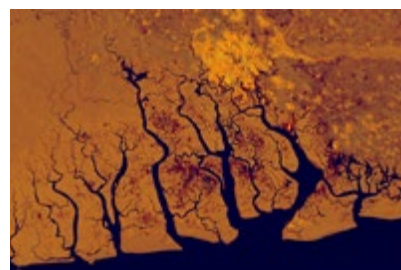
10/02: University achieves its second Athena SWAN Silver Award – with the recognition for J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics.



12/02: A 100m² native woodland was launched on campus in association with the Pocket Forest social enterprise and planted by a team made up of university staff and students, Transition Year students from Coláiste Muire Máthair, Galway, community volunteers and Brendan Smith from Terryland Forest Park.



13/02: Researchers create the world's largest collection of digital microbes – nearly a quarter million computer models – to help revolutionise our understanding of the human microbiome and its impact on health.



16/02: An international research team led by University of Galway has used earth observation data to map oil pipeline networks covering a 9000 km² region in the Niger Delta and pinpoint where crude oil spills have caused the most acute damage to the delicate mangrove ecosystem.

25/02: The first Irish study of disabled political candidates has identified financial costs and difficulty canvassing as among the many systemic barriers facing disabled candidates who wish to participate in political life in Ireland.

March



09/03: The Imirce project, a digital repository of thousands of Irish emigrant letters and memoirs dating from the late 1600s through to the mid-20th century, has been awarded a grant of \$300,000 from Carnegie Corporation of New York.



31/03: Professor Robert Scully appointed Ireland's first Established Professor of Rural and Remote Medicine.

April



02/04: The digitised archive of *Threshold*, one of Northern Ireland's longest-running literary periodicals of the 20th century, is made available online from University of Galway Library Archives.



08/04: Medicine students Allie Seminer and Alfredi Mulihano lead a major study, published in *JAMA Neurology*, examining how cardioprotective glucose-lowering therapies – medications that lower blood sugar and reduce the risk of heart disease in people with diabetes – affect the risk of developing dementia.



09/04: Bronnadh Gradaim Aitheantais ar breis agus 160 scoláire as 46 scoil ar éirigh leo pas le gradam a bhaint amach i scrúduithe ardleibhéil Gaeilge na Sraithe Sóisearaí.



11/04: Students secure three major awards at the 2025 National Student Media (Smedias) Awards including 'Film Documentary of the Year' for *Imagine War – 75 Days of Survival in Mariupol* which was made by Vladyslav Piatin-Ponomarenko as he documented his escape from Mariupol at the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



22/04: Researchers in the College of Science and Engineering have revealed Storm Éowyn caused record-breaking storm surges over 2.5m above normal levels on Ireland's west coast, the highest surges ever recorded at key locations on Ireland's western seaboard.

May



15/05: The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science James Lawless T.D. launched University of Galway's Strategic Plan 2025–2030.



19/05: Rinne an tAire Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta, James Lawless TD, an clár nua Cógaisíochta (MPharm) in Ollscoil na Gaillimhe a sheoladh go hoifigiúil. Cuirfear suas le 75 áit ar fáil do mhic léinn nua gach bliain ar an gclár seo.

20/05: An international research project has been launched to uncover how wild honey bee colonies survive and thrive in the wild across Europe's diverse landscapes. Led by University of Galway, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Where will
it take you?

Open
Days

Friday 3rd &
Saturday 4th
October
2025

Saturday
21st March
2026

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our generous contributors from the University community and alumni network who brought this publication to life with their unique views and insights. *Cois Coiribe Summer 25* was produced and edited by an in-house Content Team at University of Galway.

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