

Next week in the Oireachtas

The Personal Insolvency Bill, aimed at reforming out-dated insolvency laws and which incorporates a variety of non-judicial debt resolution processes will be discussed at second stage in the Dáil next week. Bills to be discussed in the Seanad next week include the Microenterprise Loan Fund Bill 2012 and Electoral Amendment (Political Funding) Bill 2011. The Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Committee will meet on Tuesday July 17 to discuss the Government's jobs strategy.



News & Appointments

Former Under Secretary for Energy with the Obama administration appointed to NUI Galway's Ryan Institute

Dr Kris Johnson is to join the members of the newly appointed Advisory Board for NUI Galway's Ryan Institute for environmental, marine and energy research. She is a former Under Secretary for Energy with the Obama administration in Washington, DC.

Dr Johnson is joined on the board by Dr Aaron Bernstein, Harvard Medical School; Dr Lisa Amini, IBM; Dr Niall McDonough, the European Science Foundation; and Dr James Cunningham, NUI Galway.

The Ryan Institute was formed in 2010 as a result of the strategic merger between the Environmental Change Institute and the Martin Ryan Institute for Marine Science. The Ryan Institute has over 300 researchers.

The Advisory Panel met in NUI Galway this week to coincide with the

official launch of the Ryan Institute by Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science. A public symposium entitled 'Green Shift, Blue Growth, Bright Future?' was also held on Tuesday July 10 featuring leading international experts in the environmental marine, energy and smart infrastructure research. The event was also addressed by Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

The Minister highlighted that energy matters will be high on the agenda when Ireland hosts the Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers in the first half of 2013. He also announced that he will host a major energy technology conference on May 7 2013 and his intention to progress a number of dossiers including the role of technology and research in energy and related matters.

Two key Bills complete passage through Houses of the Oireachtas

As the Oireachtas nears summer recess, two important pieces of legislation have this week passed all stages of the legislative process. The first of which, the Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Bill 2011 developed as doubts were raised as to whether a range of activities, traditionally carried out on animals by farmers and other persons with appropriate skills, had been inadvertently reserved to veterinary practitioners or veterinary nurses. Thus, the main purpose of this new Bill is to clarify the legal position by amending the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 to enable the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to exclude specified activities from being reserved to veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses.

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD, said that the Bill will result in "no legal doubt" when it comes to persons with appropriate skills and training to look after various aspects of the health and welfare needs of their animals. The procedures in question, he added, "such as bovine hoof trimming, farriery or scanning of cattle and sheep,

are important from the point of view of maintaining animals' well-being and should continue to be carried out under a least cost option by persons with the necessary skills and training".

Additionally, the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012 which will ultimately strengthen the protection of children and other vulnerable persons has passed all stages of the legislative process.

The Bill creates an offence of withholding information on serious offences where those offences are committed against a child or a vulnerable adult. Serious offences, including, sexual offences and offences such as assault causing harm, abduction, manslaughter or murder, are offences which carry a penalty of imprisonment for five years or more.

The Bill will complement both the Children First Bill and the National Vetting Bill. It will be presented to the President for his signature and is expected to enter into force in early August.

Appointment of members to the Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board

Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly TD invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified persons interested in being appointed to the soon to be established Speech and Language Therapists Board. The appointments are in accordance with the Government's recent decision to

widen the opportunity for board membership of state bodies. Members of a registration board hold office for a term of four years from the date of his/her appointment.



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IDA highlight achievements made so far in 2012 and publish annual report 2011

Despite competition from other jurisdictions and the challenging economic environment, IDA client companies announced over 5,000 jobs in the first six months of 2012 in various sectors including IT, life sciences, digital media, and international financial services.

According to the IDA, competitiveness has improved in areas such as office rents, construction costs, unit labour costs and business services in recent years, serving to boost Ireland's FDI performance. Furthermore, Ireland continues to rank strongly in the availability of skilled staff with the 2012 IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook placing Ireland number one in the world for skilled labour.

The IDA's 2011 report shows that 146,000 people are now working directly in approximately 1,000 IDA client companies. Over 13,000 new jobs were created in 2011. The report also stresses that many multinationals

are continuing to recruit in a variety of areas including IT, languages, sales and marketing.

Capital intensive projects have also increased, notably in pharmaceutical and ICT sectors. Ireland is also performing strongly in the pharmaceutical sector.

Additionally, the report highlights the need to plan for future demand of office space as some significant investments are expected. The IDA has consulted with NAMA in this regard.

Despite the positive figures, IDA CEO Barry O'Leary said there will be "challenging headwinds facing IDA and Ireland with little growth in European demand, moderate growth in the U.S. and a slowdown in the economies of China and India" yet the IDA "remains optimistic that Ireland can continue to win significant FDI, building on our strong track record".

Equality Authority annual report 2011 launched

The Equality Authority annual report 2011, launched this week, shows that over 8,000 queries were made relating to five pieces of legislation under the remit of the Authority. The report marks the conclusion of the work set out under the Authority's Strategic Plan for 2009-2011.

During 2011, 156 new case files were opened by the legal section of the Authority and by the end of the year 134 case files were closed, 25 applications for representation were considered and 23 were granted.

The Authority worked alongside the HSE crisis pregnancy on a research project exploring women's experience in paid work after pregnancy which resulted in three reports published in conjunction with the ESRI. This was the first nationally representative survey on pregnancy at work. The Authority also conducted a study on the incidence and positive impact of equality policies and flexible working.

Additional work by the Authority included the development of equality partnerships with organisations in the public and private sector. The Authority also worked to promote equality mainstreaming within the VEC and Further Education Sector.

In her summary, the Chief Executive Renee Dempsey drew attention to the planned merger of the Equality Authority with the Human Rights Commission and said how "it signals a further change for the Equality

Authority and, as before, staff will be called upon to show flexibility and adaptability in this changing environment".

Speaking at the report launch on the matter of the merger between the two bodies, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence Alan Shatter TD said how "equality and human rights are two sides of the same coin" and "equality cannot be achieved without addressing respecting human rights". The new Commission "will combine the strengths of both existing organisations. Its functions and powers will take from the best and most effective of those of the two existing organisations and will level them up, to ensure that the new body is stronger and more effective than the sum of its constituent parts".

The Minister commended the work of the group, appointed last year to deliver advice on practical issues in relation to the merger. The priority now in relation to the merger is to undertake a review of staffing needs and put together a business case. This will however incur "funding implications which will not be easy for me to deal with in the current fiscal environment" the Minister stressed. He added: "The selection process for new Commissioners will be objective and outside the influence of Government. I am concerned that the new Commission should reflect a wide spectrum of Irish society."

Science Foundation Ireland launch annual report 2011 at Euroscience Open

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) has launched their annual report 2011 which shows a number of positive outcomes including a 19 percent increase in the number of linkages with companies with 583 companies partaking in 939 linkages with SFI funded researchers. This marks an increase of 158 percent in the last four years.

In 2011, SFI researchers, as highlighted in the report, engaged in approximately 1,900 collaborations in 68 countries. These researchers reported a total of 5,740 scientific publications in that year, marking an increase of 15 percent. The report also shows that SFI researchers successfully secured €156m from external sources in 2011.

Minister of State with Responsibility for Research and Innovation, Sean Sherlock TD said the increase in industry-academic linkages over the last four years "is certainly a significant achievement and testament to the

focus of the organisation and the dedicated and innovative minds of its researchers."

He added: "As SFI enters its second decade of existence, SFI funded researchers have developed important technologies such as a microchip sensor that allows for constant monitoring of babies in cots, hospital patients and others at risk of fatalities such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)". Additionally he said: "There is a need to accelerate the delivery of economic and societal benefits from Government investment in research by prioritising resources in areas of opportunity, building closer collaboration between the research base and enterprise and making it easier to commercialise and use new knowledge. We need to do this while maintaining the world class research base that has been built by SFI over the past decade."

Memorandum of Understanding between GMIT, IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT signed

A Memorandum of Understanding has today been signed between GMIT, IT Sligo and Letterkenny. Speaking at the signing, the Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD said how the memorandum will cement the Connacht-Ulster alliance.

He added: "In today's challenging climate, it is more important than

ever that a spirit of co-operation and innovation prevails throughout our country's institutions." He continued "the building of such partnerships is the key to the delivery of many of the most important objectives of the National Strategy for Higher Education."

Education and Training Events in Public Affairs Ireland

Public Affairs Ireland is a specialist provider in training and education with a public sector focus. Our goal is to facilitate a culture of both personal and professional development and learning in the Irish public sector. We provide a wide range of training courses and CPD seminars on public affairs and regulatory matters to help delegates upskill and fulfill their potential. We work with leading experts to bring relevant, topical courses and seminars not typically found elsewhere.

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Dáil

July 17	July 18	July 19
2pm Questions (Minister for Social Protection)	10.30am Leaders Questions	10.30am Leaders Questions
3.15pm Leaders Questions	10.51am Order of Business	10.51am Order of Business
3.36pm Questions (Taoiseach)	Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2012 (Seanad) All Stages (to conclude at 5.30pm if not previously concluded) (Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht)	Supplementary Estimate (back from Committee) (without debate) (Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation)
4.36pm Order of Business	Criminal Justice (Search Warrants) Bill 2012 Committee and Remaining Stages (Department of Justice and Equality)	Gaeltacht Bill 2012 (Seanad) Committee and Remaining Stages (to conclude at 2.30pm if not previously concluded)
5.06pm Topical Issues	Personal Insolvency Bill 2012 Second Stage Resumed (Department of Justice and Equality)	Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Bill 2011 (Seanad) Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (to conclude at 5.30pm if not previously concluded) (Department of the Environment Community and Local Government)
Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Bill 2012 Order for Report, Report and Final Stages (Department of Education and Skills)	1.30pm SOS	5.30pm Topical Issues
Personal Insolvency Bill 2012 Second Stage Resumed (Department of Justice and Equality)	2.30pm Questions (Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)	6.18pm Questions (Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)
7.30pm Private Members Business	3.45pm Topical issues	
Afternoon Business Continued	4.33pm Morning business continued	
	7.30pm Private Members Business	

Seanad

July 17	July 18	July 19
2.30pm Order of Business	10.30am Order of Business	10.30am Order of Business
3.45pm Industrial Relations (Amendment) (No.3) Bill 2012 – Report and Final Stages [Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation]	12pm Statements on Developments in the European Union and Ireland's Presidency of the European Council, January to June 2013 [An Taoiseach]	11.45am Microenterprise Loan Fund Bill 2012 – Report and Final Stages [Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation]
5.15pm Microenterprise Loan Fund Bill 2012 - Committee Stage [Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation]	1.30pm Animal Health and Welfare Bill 2012 – Report and Final Stages [Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine]	1pm Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Bill 2012 – Second Stage [Minister for Education and Skills]
	3.15pm European Arrest Warrant (Application to Third Countries and Amendment) and Extradition (Amendment) Bill 2012- Committee and Remaining Stages [Minister for Justice Equality and Defence]	3pm Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Bill 2011 – Committee and Remaining Stages [Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform]
	4.30pm Private Members Business [Senators David Norris, Sean Barrett]	5pm Health (Pricing and Supply) Bill 2012 – Second Stage [Minister for Health]
	4.30pm Private Members Business [Senators David Norris, Sean Barrett]	July 20
		10am Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Bill 2012 – Committee and Remaining Stages [Minister for Education and Skills]
		12.30pm Electoral Amendment (Political Funding) Bill 2011 - Report Stage (Amendments from Dail Éireann) [Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government]

Committee Meetings

July 17	July 18	July 19
1.30pm Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Jobs Strategy: (a) Action Plan for Jobs; (b) Investment Strategy; and (c) Regional visits update. [IDA Ireland]	9.30am Transport and Communications Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: The future role of the Post Office network [(i) Representatives of An Post; and (ii) Representatives of the Irish Postmasters' Union]	9.30am Health and Children Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: The DePuy hip replacement recall : [(i) Representatives from Patient Focus; Medical Injuries Alliance and Irish Medicines Board; and (ii) Officials from the Health Service Executive]
2pm Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Post EU Council of Ministers Meeting [Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine]	10am Education and Social Protection Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Reform of Teacher Education: [(i) Teaching Council - An Comhairle Mhúinteoireachta; and (ii) Student teacher group]	10am Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) S.I. No 214 of 2012 re Fishery Harbour Centres (Rates and Charges) Order, 2012 and; (ii) Allocation of herring quota in Irish waters [Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine]
2.15pm Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Report on Water Provision by the Joint Committee on Environment, Transport, Culture and the Gaeltacht [Minister for the NewERA Project]; and (ii) Climate Change [Mr Éamonn Meehan, Deputy Director, Trócaire; and Ms Gina Hanrahan, Climate and Environment Researcher, Institute for International and European Affairs]	2.30pm Justice, Defence and Equality Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting	11.30am European Union Affairs Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: Developments in Bosnia Herzegovina [Mr Ed Vulliamy, Journalist, The Guardian and The Observer]
2pm European Union Affairs Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: Priorities of the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union from July to December 2012 [H.E. Dr Michalis Stavrinou, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus]	5pm Privileges (Sub-Committee) Room 2 (off Main Hall), Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting	
	5.30pm Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: Meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Trade Council [An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade]	