

Annual Report

2024–2025





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Foreword

The purposes of the Association stated in the Celtic Club rules are:

(a) Cultural Celebration: To establish and maintain a Club whose members support and celebrate pride in Irish heritage and culture as well as that of the broader Celtic community;

(b) Facilities and Resources: To provide a suitable venue, facilities and other resources for the benefit, education and enjoyment of members and guests;

(c) Promotion of Gaelic and Irish Culture: To promote and encourage the Gaelic language, Irish music, art and culture;

(d) Celtic Library and Meeting Spaces: To establish and maintain a library of Celtic literature, cultural artefacts and related material and provide rooms for meetings of Celtic heritage groups from all over Victoria, embracing modern technologies and techniques;

(e) Charitable Contributions: To make donations out of the funds of the Association or otherwise to such public or private charitable, benevolent, patriotic, educational or cultural institutions and causes as the Board or members by resolution in a general meeting may from time to time determine;

(f) Licensing: To apply for, obtain, retain, and renew any and all licences and permits necessary or desirable for the carrying out these purposes from time to time.



Board Members



Prof Patrick McGorry AO
President



Prof Ronan McDonald
Vice President



Lynda Meredith
Treasurer



Michael Cooney
Secretary



Fergal Coleman
Committee



James Dunne
Committee



Prof Rosemary Sheehan AM
Committee



Nial Finegan
Committee



Aoife Kealy
Committee

President's Report

This will be my final President's Report, as I have decided to not re-nominate for the role of President.

I did successfully stand for election for a standard Board role for a further term. I want to assist with succession and transition and to help ensure that the hard won gains made over recent years by the Celtic Club are maintained and built upon under new and renewed leadership.

When I became involved with the Celtic Club and joined the committee some 6 years ago, the club was in a state of deep identity and financial crisis and riven by division, blame and conflict, echoes only of which remain today. Members were in grief and anger for the loss of their home in Queen Street. The club's finances were in disarray and money was being poorly managed, with significant waste and losses. There was no strategic plan, and the expertise available to the club through its committee was patchy and limited and the governance boundary between management and committee did not exist. There was a high level of anxiety and distress, major distrust and conflict, not merely among the membership but within the committee as well. Our club experienced a near death experience; a club that had existed since 1887 as a cultural pillar of Melbourne society.

When I became President, I resolved to build a new team to stabilise and professionalise the management of the club and aim to reimagine and reinvent it for the future. The Celtic Club was inward looking, with an ageing membership and represented a pretty unattractive value proposition for new members. Its relationships with Irish Australian organisations and the wider Irish community especially recent arrivals from Ireland were tenuous. A new vision for the 21st century, a new strategic plan, and much more prudent

governance and financial management were required. All of these aims have been achieved or are well on the way to being so, particularly over the last two years. The Board initiated a process for a new Strategic Plan and the membership were consulted and approved this at an AGM. There were several objectives within this plan, with the most tangible one being the successful establishment of a new home for the Celtic Club at the Wild Geese in Brunswick. This was the dominant and urgent request made of the Board by all the members and it has been achieved beyond the expectations of most members.

Other elements were equally crucial. The financial position of the club has been stabilised, though further work needs to occur. The events programme is vibrant and expanding in all directions, the culture of the club has become healthier, and the board has become more skilled, responsible, constructive and harmonious. A key reform was to separate the role of the board and management through the appointment of a talented, experienced and dedicated CEO in Rob Clifford. Rob has established an effective team and has run the hospitality business through The Wild Geese in a fabulous way. The ever-evolving and highly diverse range of cultural, business and social events has been nothing short of amazing. Rob has been a vital success factor in the club's renaissance. I would like to acknowledge the energy and vision that Board member Fergal Coleman has contributed to the revival especially to our flourishing events program. The most recent example being the highly successful evening in conversation with economist and journalist David McWilliams of the Irish Times at the Brunswick Town Hall.

And all this has been achieved without the artificial life support of poker machines and gambling, an activity that the values of the modern Celtic Club no longer support and which our members told us they did not want.

Naturally, this transition has proved difficult for a minority of members. And we have tried to be as inclusive as we can while holding fast to the vision of re-imagining and reinventing the club. We've tried to maintain respect and affection for the heritage and traditions of the club and the loyal long term membership, but keeping our eyes fixed firmly on the horizon ahead, which means the emerging generations of Irish Australians and recent arrivals from Ireland.

There is still a lot of work to do, and we need to rise above the inevitable residual tensions that persist. As an Irish Australian, it has been an unexpected but huge honour and privilege to have held the office president over the past six years. I have really enjoyed it although it has been really challenging at times. I would like to sincerely thank all those members that have offered me encouragement and support, and even the ones that haven't (!) and particularly to all members of previous committees of management and the current board with whom I've worked. Even when there have been tensions and conflict, I recognise that all those involved possess a deep commitment and love for the Celtic Club and were motivated by their perspective on its best interests.

It's difficult to single out individuals, but I'm particularly grateful to Brian Shanahan who encouraged me and assisted me to take on the role, to Michael Cooney for his incredible skill, resilience and work ethic in the role of secretary over the last couple of years. To Ronan McDonald, our inspirational Vice President, who will receive my unequivocal support to take on the role of President. I would like to acknowledge also Lynda Meredith, who has been such a wonderful Treasurer over the recent period. I acknowledge the commitment and service of all the other members of the outgoing board, especially Rosemary Sheehan, Nial Finegan and James Dunne who will not continue, and also Aoife Kealy and Fergal Coleman who have been re-elected.

Agus cead mile fáilte a Isla Sutherland, Celia Fowler agus Seamus Bradley to the new Board. This transition injects new energy and skills alongside an experienced and cohesive team with runs on the board. Finally, enormous gratitude once again to Rob Clifford, JP Dargan, Lisa Assomatiнос and the fabulous staff team who have created such a special atmosphere and culture at the Club and the Wild Geese Bistro.

I wish the incoming board and the entire membership well for the journey ahead and, with a renewed vote of confidence from the members at the recent election, am absolutely convinced now that the club can go on from strength to strength.

Go Raibh Mile Maith Agaibh.

Patrick McGorry

Celtic Club President



Secretary's Report

This year what I most want members to know is how grateful I am for your friendship and support.

I love our big events: St Pat's breakfast, Lions lunch, McWilliams in conversation. But little moments – harp night in the lounge, a chat with "book club John" at the bar, crossing paths with a new member on the way to Jewell Station – keep me wanting to turn up.

And whenever I share a pint with Patrick McGorry, I always leave feeling more optimistic. When Patrick stepped in as President, our club was at rock bottom. Patrick's generosity to make himself a hostage to our fortunes amazes me, his legacy as President makes him a legend of our Club, and we're so lucky he'll continue serving.

The election of our team four years ago, followed by an uncontested Board return two years later, told me members were ready for growth and recognised the urgent need for change. We spent time working with members on a strategy – and then for forty-eight months we rolled up our sleeves, made decisions, and got things done. That led to big achievements: removing poker machine licences permanently, appointing a new CEO, opening up our venue, updating our club rules, introducing the 1887 membership model with a digital platform, and launching an expression of interest to potentially sell our South Melbourne property.

I do believe we have got the big calls right. I think that's why the nominees endorsed by the Board were elected – and why the nominees they pledged to support for the positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary were strongly supported. Our re-election delivered a strong message of support for our work. But I know we didn't wait for consensus.

So support isn't the only message from the election. You also told us you want us to be more transparent, to share more of our thinking, to include you more in our decision-making. That you want the tech to work better, the membership and payment card to be easier to use. And that you have a heap of great ideas for events and activities – especially showcasing our rich collection of heritage items and connecting with a new generation of Irish and Irish-Australian communities. I am keenly aware we have lots to do. Your message is clear: do stay on track, do keep improving – and do some things differently.

It's a good time for a change in approach because we are in a new phase. We can now shift gears from a four-year urgent project to a much steadier cadence of ongoing discussion and decision, and we will do that. We're still rebuilding, we've still got big decisions to make, but we are well past that period where a small Board and executive just had no choice but to scrum down and bind tight to deliver on your strategy and get all the things done. We're here now, and we can take more time and bring more people along with us from here.

I'm particularly glad for that because we have wanted to include people more. I think what's not well understood is that for four years, the biggest barrier to the Board engaging in good conversations and listening to our members actively – and the biggest dilemma for us as leaders – has been how best to manage, and how much to discuss, the persistent conflict between a ginger group of members and the club as a whole. Recent events kind of relieve us of this dilemma! The group have really outed themselves. So I know we can now be more frank and I feel that's probably a good thing.

Here's the story.

As many of us know and others of us are learning, some individuals have been pursuing disputes with the Club for most of our recent history, since our members chose to develop our former site in the Melbourne CBD.

The behaviour of those individuals dramatically escalated in the past four months. As I reported to the Special General Meeting, in August and September, an anonymous person or persons with a gmail account – and with access to court documents provided solely to two members under court order – breached numerous laws.

These breaches included: publishing false statements regarding the Club's allocation of funds, financial management, membership base, and governance (and its board members and senior members) contrary to the Defamation Act. Improper use of information recorded on the register of members contrary to the Associations Incorporation Reform Act. Serious invasion of privacy, contrary to applicable privacy principles and the new statutory tort of serious invasion of privacy under the federal Privacy Act. Individuals visited the homes of members of our Club uninvited and unannounced in their effort to spread false statements and pursue these disputes. Personal phone numbers were published on the internet. A home address was published on the internet.

Through the election process the same group and some supporters continued with this pattern of behaviour. Emailing or otherwise publishing lengthy imprecations, threatening regulatory, legal, media, professional and even personal consequences against other club members when they did not get their way. They rang up the paper, they rang up the public service, they fumed and wheedled and cajoled, they bullied when they thought it would work and they whinged when they worked out it wouldn't.

At one point I received complaints about the sausage special on ballot day. Honestly.

But much worse, throughout the election process the Returning Officer, Club office-bearers and our staff were bombarded with emails and messages, asking similar and related questions, in a way that was both chaotic and semi-coordinated; demanding documents and records, making complaints polite and impolite, challenging the integrity of every detail of our finances and processes, implying or even stating threats, overwhelming the staff with phone calls and messages and then complaining about slow replies, seeking the resignation of officers. One even demanded the whole election be put on hold.

An individual has published a number of false statements under her own name. Another has sent seriously threatening emails to officers. Another has abused our bar staff in the venue. He has previously been warned about that behaviour.

These last are especially serious matters and will be dealt with. So we have now commenced legal steps to prevent any repetition and we have begun to consider disciplinary action under our rules. That will no doubt provoke more disruptive conduct. When that comes, I can only thank you in advance for your patience and support as I uphold the standards of our rules and the law.

Through that whole storm, what the Board decided to do was what we've done since day one. We backed ourselves – and we trusted you. So our election proceeded and our members had their say. Thank you.

But it has its costs. For years we have tried to be inclusive and engaging while trying to keep a warm and welcoming Club that can attract new members – but it's hard to do that while we are in this defensive crouch dealing with this group.

For a long time we just thought "we all know someone like this" and figured eventually they would move on. And we want you to have fun, and we want you to be proud of the club. So we haven't spent a lot of time telling you about the background. But the price of that is when we seem a bit defensive or reluctant to take feedback you don't have the full context of the other "feedback" we have been managing. That's something I regret.

In coming months, I genuinely want some open-ended discussions about member experience – like how can we get the tech to work better, how much live sport we show in the front bar, what night is best for more trad sessions – and about the big picture, like the future of our real estate holdings and assets, the future of our lease arrangements at the Wild Geese. But while even a few individuals still spread conspiracies about our finances and structures, or stomp in and out of meetings at the drop of a hat demanding to know who decided what and when or where the carbon of the minutes is, instead of talking about the topic at hand, it's just really hard.

We're going to give it some thought and quite sincerely, if you've got any suggestions, I'd love you to drop me a line. We will definitely do some things to open up our processes, and we will definitely find that hard to manage at times, but it's time for a change of approach, and you can look forward to that in the coming year.

For all of that, there is a lot of good news. I'm so optimistic, and not only when I've had a pint with Pat. As you put your feet up toward the end of the year, as you consider our report, and as you think about the future of our club, I think the best way to judge it is this. Is the Celtic Club better off today than it was four years ago?

Our Club's home is now a welcoming place for members and their families and a prestige destination for the Irish Government. The Wild Geese is the best Irish bistro in Melbourne – booked out on Father's Day, booked out at Christmas this year I am sure. We have more than six hundred members, up fifteen per cent in a

year. We are younger, we have more women, more working people and we're more representative of our community. We run hundreds of events and activities and members attend them in huge numbers. Our membership model includes new features and discounts for all. We have stable real and financial assets, cash at bank; we are debt free and proudly pokies-free; we are fully audited and fully compliant.

If that's not better off, I don't know what is. And that's why I back us all in to get this done.

Since 2021, we all developed and delivered a strategy to save and revive this great institution. To bring us home. We chose St Patrick's Day, St Brigid's Day, Bloomsday, breakfast, lunch, literature, dance, trivia, the Gaelic games, rugby, history, music, company, fun – and we chose professional processes, responsible decision-making, good commercial sense, and a patient and strategic approach. And look around us – it worked. We should all be really proud.

This coming year: we'll deliver a great experience for our members and we'll carry out our purpose. A sustainable business model at our Brunswick home and prudent decisions about our properties. A clear path towards a balanced return on the venue operations. Over the next four years: we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of our first female members in 2026; we celebrate the 140th anniversary of our Club's foundation in 2027; and we aspire to own our own home, at the right price and in a commercially responsible manner.

That's this Board's plan. That's this Club's future. That's my commitment to you. And it is why we are so grateful for our members' trust and support.

My family didn't lose its Irish on purpose. But I know this bit. *Ní Neart Go Cur Le Chéile*. See you at the Geese.

Michael Cooney

Celtic Club Secretary



Saint Patrick's Day 2025

@ Zinc



Community Engagement, Events & Cultural Impact

OVERVIEW: A CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

Since the opening of its new home at The Wild Geese Hotel in Brunswick, the Celtic Club of Victoria has experienced a cultural renaissance, establishing itself once again as a leading beacon for Irish and broader Celtic heritage in Melbourne. Over a two-year period, the Club has delivered an extraordinary program of cultural, social, musical, and literary events designed to reconnect members with the traditions of Ireland and the wider Celtic world.

With an impressive total of 518 activities hosted and a cumulative attendance of 13,075 guests, the Club has significantly contributed to a revival of Celtic identity, vibrancy, and community spirit in Melbourne. The diversity, quality, and volume of programming reflect the Club's renewed commitment to honouring its cultural mission while appealing to a wide and evolving membership base.

EVENT CATEGORIES OVERVIEW

ACTIVITY TYPE	EVENTS	TOTAL ATTENDANCE
Entertainment & Culinary	59	2,302
Music & Dancing	215	1,830
Networking and Social	28	1,050
Language & Literature	30	863
Partner & Community Events	186	7,030
TOTAL	518	13,075



Community Engagement, Events & Cultural Impact

Program Highlights by Category

Entertainment & Culinary



- Wine Dinners**
7 events / 133 guests
- Trivia Nights**
51 events / 2,117 guests
- Comedy Night**
1 event / 52 guests

Music & Dancing



- Set Dancing**
13 events / 375 guests
- Uilleann Pipe Nights**
5 events / 125 guests
- Ukulele Nights**
3 events / 57 guests
- Choir in a Pub**
15 events / 875 guests
- Open Mic Nights**
7 events / 398 guests

Networking & Social



- Celtic Conversations**
11 events / 364 guests
- Celtic Connections**
10 events / 468 guests
- Business Club Lunches**
7 events / 218 guests

Language & Literature



- Language Events**
4 events / 205 guests
- Literary Events & Book Clubs**
26 events / 658 guests

Partner & Community Events



- Special Club Events**
20 events / 1,772 guests
- Kindred Group Meetings**
18 events / 802 guests
- Private Functions**
144 events / 4,204 guests
- Embassy Events**
4 events / 252 guests

Signature & Community Highlights



- St. Patrick's Day Breakfast**
@ Zinc
- Bloomsday Event**
@ The Wild Geese
- St. Brigid's Day Cultural Forum**
- Seasonal Céilí Dances**
- Bord Bia "Meet the Makers" Whiskey Tasting**
- Pop-Up Gaeltacht**
(April 2025)



Month Events and Activations Plan (2025-2026)

Building on the Club's cultural leadership and momentum, this strategy outlines our events and activations framework for the next 12 months. With 535 events and 16,785 attendees recently recorded, this plan expands our reach, particularly into professional and culinary spaces, ensuring the Club remains both a cultural and community leader.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Deepen cultural engagement through vibrant, accessible programming.
2. Expand community and intergenerational participation.
3. Strengthen culinary offerings to highlight Irish cuisine and hospitality.
4. Extend reach into professional and corporate networks.
5. Maintain and grow high-quality partner and embassy collaborations.

MONTHLY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	TARGET AUDIENCE	FOCUS AREA
Traditional Music Sessions	Weekly (Fridays)	Members, general public	Cultural Tradition
Live Music Performances	Weekly (Fri/Sat)	Social members, younger audience	Entertainment & Music
Trivia Nights	Weekly (Wednesdays)	Broad appeal, local community	Social & Engagement
Choir in a Pub Nights	Monthly	All ages, general public	Wellbeing & Cultural Singing
Open Mic Nights	Monthly	Local artists, creatives	Talent Development
Set Dancing / Céilí	Monthly	Dance enthusiasts, older members	Cultural Preservation
Uilleann Pipes Sessions	Monthly	Members, general public	Cultural Tradition
Wine Dinners	Bi-monthly	Culinary members, corporates	Culinary & Hospitality
Comedy Nights	Quarterly	Broader social community	Entertainment
Uilleann Pipe Nights	Bi-monthly	Music lovers, Irish culture audience	Traditional Instrumentation
Literary Events & Clubs	Monthly	Literary members, professionals	Literature & Storytelling
Language Events	Quarterly	Irish language learners	Language Revitalisation
Celtic Conversations	Monthly (Lunch)	Retired professionals, academics	Intellectual & Cultural Dialogue
Celtic Connections	Monthly	Corporate and professional networks	Networking & Professionalism
Business Club Lunches	Monthly	Business, industry, civic leaders	Professional Networking
Special Club Events	Quarterly	Full membership base	Celebration & Club Identity
Kindred Group Events	As Scheduled	Partner organisations	Community Building
Embassy & Cultural Events	As Scheduled	Irish Embassy, cultural reps	Diplomacy & Representation

Seasonal Highlights & New Additions

MONTH	FEATURE ACTIVATION	NEW/ENHANCED FOCUS
July	British & Irish Lions Rugby Lunch @ Zinc	Major Event – Sport & Heritage
August	Celtic Chef's Table Series launch	Culinary & Premium Dining
September	Spring Literary Salon & Whisky Tasting	Cross-discipline Culture & Spirits
October	Irish Comedy Gala Night	Comedy & Community Engagement
November	Gaeltacht Language Weekend	Language & Immersion
December	Wild Geese Céilí Christmas Edition	Dance, Intergenerational
January	Summer Music Series	Family-friendly & Tourism Engagement
February	St. Brigid's Day Women's Cultural Forum	Women's History & Culture
March	St. Patrick's Day Festival at Fed Square	Flagship Public Event
April	Business Leaders in Celtic Culture Lunch	Corporate Engagement
May	Irish Writers & Whiskey – Literary and Spirits Festival	Fusion Event (Literature & Food)
June	Bloomsday Immersive Reading @ Wild Geese	Literature, Drama, Music

CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates the Celtic Club of Victoria's leadership in cultural activation, community building, and Irish-Australian engagement. With a forward-focused strategy and sustained momentum, the Club is well-positioned to strengthen its impact and grow its legacy as Melbourne's premier centre of Celtic life.



Members: Life, Veteran and Vale



LIFE	VETERAN	VETERAN CONTINUED	VALE
Bernard Brophy	Merryl McNamara	Patricia Fox	Patrick McNamara
Francis Collins	Edward Beard	Alfredo Giarrusso	Martin McPhee
Frances Devlin-Glass	James Billman	Peter Gorman	Jim Mitchell
Peter Gavin	Michael Bugler	George Gould	James Monaghan
John Hutchinson	Peter Byrne	Sig Hoven	Maurice Moore
Bernard Lyons	Joe Byrne	Bill Hynes	John Murphy
Hon Tim Mawe	Brian Castanelli	Francis Jones	Margaret Noonan
Cushla McNamara	Michael Conway	Anthony Kiernan	James O'Brien
Phillip Moore	Hugh Corder	Philip Lambrick	Donal O'Grady
Val Noone OAM	John Crennan	Michael Lennon	Christopher O'Malley
Marion O'Hagan	James D'Arcy	William Lowden	Vincent O'Reilly
Brian Shanahan	Joseph Doherty	Gerald McConville	Gerard O'Toole
	Graeme Duggan	Malcolm McKenzie	John Pelly
	Robert Eddington	Sean McKeon	Paul Prendergast
	Owen Fitzsimons	Helene McNamara	Noel Riley
			The Committee on behalf of its members extends its condolences to the families and friends of those members who have recently passed away.

Cultural Heritage Group - Update

CHAIR'S REPORT

In 2024-2025, the Cultural Heritage Group and kindred associated cultural groups, commissioned and presented a variety of programs, events and activities to encourage community interest and involvement in the Club and in the Irish community more broadly. The Cultural Heritage Group's aims include enriching the appreciation of our Irish and Australian Irish heritage, history and culture, and to that end the commission talks and advise the Board and the CEO on potential events.



Activities of the Cultural Group 2024-2025

Celtic Club past events

LECTURES, SEMINARS, TALKS, FILMS

The Cultural Heritage Group of the Celtic Club is active in commissioning presentations, talks and seminars at the Wild Geese, sometimes within the Club membership, but sometimes with kindred organisations.

11 MAY 2025: INTERVIEW WITH COLUM McCANN BY CHRIS MURRAY

The major feature of the year was award winning Irish writer Colum McCann speaking at the Melbourne Writers Festival on Saturday 10 May 2025 and then he spoke at the club on Sunday afternoon 11 May.

Colum initially spoke about his latest novel *Twist*, which is about the data cables running along the bottom of the ocean that connect the modern world. Severance of these cables creates a potential crisis. Specialists in deep sea cable repair are among the unacknowledged powerful people of our times, vital to maintaining the global flow of information.

McCann recognises the drama inherent to such a high-stakes scenario and wrote a documentary-style fiction about a repair crew.

However, because of the Middle East issue he also spoke about his novel *Apeirogon* published in February 2020. The novel explores the conflict in the Middle East. It follows the story of two men who each lost a daughter. One is Palestinian, the other Israeli. The story follows two real-life men: Rami Elhanan, an Israeli graphic designer, and Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian scholar who, when he was 17, had been sentenced to a 7 year term of imprisonment for throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. Consisting of 1001 short sections, the two central figures bond over the violent deaths of their respective daughters and become peace activists and McCann said on the day their grandsons are following in the footsteps.

Dr. Chris Murray a lecturer on Irish Literature at Monash University was the MC. Colum held a Q&A session. He was entertaining and well received by a full house. Brunswick Bound was the bookseller and did good business selling McCann's books.

The PBS NewsHour TV program interviewed Colum on 16 June and again on 30 June.

23 JULY 2025: MELBOURNE RARE BOOKS WEEK TALK ON JOYCE

Tuesday 23 July for Melbourne Rare Books Week free lecture programme: <https://rarebooksmelbourne.com/event/poking-the-bear/> at the club.

The impact of censorship and the Obscenity Trial on Joyce's revisions of *Ulysses*.

Speaker: Honorary Associate Professor Frances Devlin-Glass

James Joyce was notoriously resistant to bending to censorship, even when it was demanded by friendly patrons like Ezra Pound, and much more so when he was institutionally punished. *Ulysses*' publication in 1922 in Paris, following the high-stakes affray in the US courts which started in 1921, was a miracle.

This presentation looked at Joyce's response to his critics as he revised the novel, and argues that censorship delivered a radically different, and more daring, novel from what we might have had.

Presented by Bloomsday in Melbourne Inc. in partnership with the Melbourne Rare Books Festival and the Celtic Club at the Wild Geese to a capacity audience of over 70 people. This was a first for both Bloomsday and MRBW and the latter organisation's first excursion into Joyce. Bloomsday in Melbourne were pleased to note a spike in memberships. Patrons new to the Club were impressed by what the Club had to offer.

Celtic Conversations Monthly Lunch Series

24 JULY 2024: ERIC HOWARD - AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY AND EUREKA: THEN AND NOW

On Wednesday 24 July, Eric Howard, President of Eureka Australia Descendants and Supporters Inc., spoke on *Australian Democracy and Eureka: Then and now*.

Handouts from Eric included the Ballarat Reform League Charter of 11 November 1854, the Eureka Australia brochure on the Eureka Melbourne app and Who We Are and What We Do.

Jim Brown (a former Channel 10 reporter, singer and poet) performed a new song he composed about Eureka.

28 AUGUST 2024: SARAH HOWE & CHARLES RICHARDSON

Dr. Sarah Howe & Dr. Charles Richardson, political scientists, spoke earlier in the year at the Melbourne Irish Studies Seminar in Newman College.

They reported on a study of the latest NI election and the recent Northern Ireland election for the UK House of Commons from a Psephologist and a political scientist.

Sarah is the National Chair of the Australian Fabians, Charles is a blogger and it is titled *The World is not Enough*. They distributed various handouts explaining their study.

25 SEPTEMBER 2024: SOCIAL HISTORIAN, DR. JANET McCALMAN

Prof. McCalman's topic was *The Irish in Melbourne, from Richmond to Kew*.

Janet's talk ranged widely over the differences between the four private schools on the 69 tram-route (Genezzano, Trinity, MLC and Scotch) and the different educational aspirations of their families; those who settled in Melbourne before and after the Famine (both Vandemonians and Irish) and the kind of crimes they were guilty of and what happened to them when they became free in Australia; how the Land Selection Act of 1861 in Victoria was especially advantageous to the Irish because they often came from rural areas and had experience (cf USA where they tended to congregate in cities); about the influence on Chartist ideas in Victoria, and in particular on Eureka; and, the extent to which Catholic schools gave opportunities to women and led to pathways to University and even into courses not designated as suitable for girls (medicine and law), this despite many nuns and brothers not being formally credentialled (until the 1970s).

She claimed that Xavier, for instance, produced more judges than the entire Protestant and State systems. Janet signed the Club library book *Journeyings*, which she wrote in 1993.

30 OCTOBER 2024: DR. STEVE CAREY, BLOOMSDAY IN MELBOURNE

Club member Steve addressed the subject, *Is James Joyce Dead?*

Long challenging books by dead white men are not the drawcard they once were. Is there any point in reading Joyce anymore? Steve made the case why those who haven't read Ulysses (yet) might want to have another crack at it. The talk was made available for publication in *Tinteán*.

27 NOVEMBER 2024: DR. GEORGINA FITZPATRICK, HISTORIAN

Dr. Georgina Fitzpatrick, titled her talk 'In the field with David Fitzpatrick'.

She shared her unique experiences living in Ireland for twenty years and her insights into the work of her late husband, Professor David Fitzpatrick. In her presentation, Dr. Fitzpatrick delved into their time in Co. Clare during the 1970s, when she accompanied David on his original field trip to interview elderly survivors of the War of Independence. The talk was made available for publication in *Tinteán*.

26 FEBRUARY 2025: CARMEL McEVEY, GENEALOGIST

Carmel spoke on 'Researching Irish Ancestry within a contextual framework'.

Carmel McEvey is on the Committee of the Irish Ancestry Discussion Circle of the Genealogical Society of Victoria, has taught family history research skills at U3A, and has a MA (Hons) in History of Family and a Certificate of Genealogical Methods from the University of Limerick.

Carmel stepped in when club president Patrick McGorry found he was unable to speak as he was required to meet the Prime Minister.

26 MARCH 2025: RACHEL NAUGHTON, DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST

Rachel Naughton is the granddaughter of Thomas Slattery of Ballyporeen, Tipperary. She married into the Naughton family of the John Naughtons of Limerick. Rachel herself was born and reared in Hay NSW. She has been the Archivist for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne since 1996.

Rachel spoke about why Archbishop Daniel Mannix would make a black and white silent film in 1920, called *Ireland Will Be Free*.

Black and white and silent was the only kind of film you could make in 1920. Like many of the educated Irish, Mannix was not overly political until after 1916. But like many Irish, educated or otherwise, Mannix was horrified at the extreme English response to the Easter Rebellion of 1916. *Ireland Will Be Free* came out of that reaction.

The club showed the film *Ireland Will Be Free* with Val Noone as a guest speaker to introduce it and provided a running commentary, on Wednesday evening 07 May.

The club digitised the film, cutting out the sections not relevant to the 1920 St Patrick's Day March. This event was fully booked, and the club intends showing the film again on Sunday afternoon 09 November with Val providing a running commentary again.

25 JUNE 2025: DR. KEVIN MOLLOY, PRINCIPAL CURATOR, VICTORIAN AND AUSTRALIAN COLLECTIONS, STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA IN MELBOURNE

Kevin Molloy spoke on the Irish collection at the State Library of Victoria. He undertakes research and publishes on international Irish print networks, book history, migration and the nineteenth century Irish-American novel. He completed his PhD at Trinity College Dublin on the historian of eighteenth-century Ireland William Lecky. In 2024 he finished an oral history research project at Monash University documenting post-war Irish migration to Australia, focusing principally on those who arrived in Victoria, South Australia and the ACT between 1948 and 1971.

30 JULY 2025: MICHAEL VAN LEEUWEN, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF EUREKA AUSTRALIA DESCENDANTS AND SUPPORTERS

'How the Eureka events helped Australia to avoid the Resource Curse.'

The resource paradox refers to a common situation where countries rich in natural resources, such as oil, minerals, or trade crops like cotton, tend to experience slower economic growth, poorer governance, greater civil violence and social inequality compared to countries with fewer natural resources.

There are only a few countries in the world where the extraction of valuable natural resources has led to ongoing prosperity – the resource blessing. Australia is one of them.

The Eureka Stockade was an armed conflict that took place between the British Army and several hundred miners at Ballarat in 1854. It is one of the very few times in the occupation of the entire continent of Australia that the British Army formed a line, fixed bayonets and charged... This would appear to be a classic example of the Resource Paradox in action.

However, this ultimately proved not to be the case in Victoria. British legal norms (such as the jury system and private property) were able, just, to resist the violence of the state and successfully push back. All this ultimately led to the peaceful extraction of mineral wealth propping up the state and national economy from the 1850s to the present day – the Resource Blessing.

27 AUGUST 2025: PROFESSOR DIANNE HALL, HISTORIAN FROM VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

What did Irish people know about Australia in the 1930s?

By the 1930s, most families in Ireland knew people who had left Ireland. But how much did they know about Australia, rather than North America where most migrants went? She talked about the essays written by school children and their teachers in the 1930s for the Folklore commission. Among folk stories about magical connections between Irish and Australian places and people, there is information about individuals as well as more well-known Irish Australians such Michael Dwyer and even Ned Kelly!

Dianne Hall is professor of history at Victoria University and also the co-author with Elizabeth Malcolm of *A new history of the Irish in Australia* (2018).

Saint Patrick's Day 2025

@ The Wild Geese



Forthcoming Celtic Conversations

24 SEPTEMBER 2025: RACHEL NAUGHTON

Archivist & Museum Manager of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission is speaking on the topic of the wonderful Irish gifts given to Mannix during his episcopate 1912–1962. Especially on his trip to USA (1920) and Ireland (1925), and the Irish gifts that he received relating to 1920, which were sent to him in Australia because he was not allowed to visit Ireland in 1920.

29 OCTOBER 2025: SIOBHAN McKEEVER

Medical practitioner and member of the Cultural Heritage Group will speak on Wednesday 29 October on skin cancer which is the most common form of cancer in Ireland.

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world and the Irish in Australia are particularly vulnerable.

Siobhan completed a haematology/oncology fellowship (1987–1989) at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio and has worked for over 30 years in general practice in the Doncaster/Templestowe area.

She is delighted to have the opportunity to share her knowledge on the causes, treatment and prevention of this common disease.

26 NOVEMBER 2025: PROFESSOR RONAN McDONALD

Professor Ronan McDonald is the chair of Irish studies at the University of Melbourne. In 2019, he organised and MC'd a symposium on Irish Australian Literature at the club with a dozen academics from around Australia participating. Their papers were subsequently published in a special edition of Australian Literary Studies titled *The Uses of Irish-Australian Literature* in September 2021. So he will be speaking about developments since.

28 JANUARY 2026: PATRICK McGORRY

Wednesday January 28 the much-awaited interview of Patrick McGorry by Eoin Killackey is pencilled in.

25 FEBRUARY 2026: JOHN McBAIN

30 minute presentation on how Scotland migrated from near the South Pole (via tectonic movement over millions of years to its current position) and dragged the other UK countries with it.

We will lunch in the bistro and then adjourn to the members bar for the presentation.



Celtic Club past events

16 AUGUST 2024: VETERANS AFTERNOON TEA, STUDENT AWARDS

Veterans Afternoon Tea Party and Prize-Giving Ceremony with contributions from the university students who win a club award (they received a \$250 club voucher).

On Wednesday 14 August 2024, the following students received awards at the Veteran's gathering.

- Ronan McDonald (Melbourne University) nominated Deeksha Koul.
- Di Hall (Victoria University) put forward Laura Jayne.
- Chris Murray (Monash University) recommended Matilda McClintock.
- Matthew Ryan (ACU) made an apology for Greta Wingrove-Lupton. Mathew spoke on behalf of her.

The professors introduced their respective awardees and the students spoke about their research for about 5 minutes.

All Life and Veteran members (30 years continuous membership) were invited to this annual event.

Eileen Mount and Doug Bishop interviewed life member Bernie Brophy for club records.

Siobhan McKeever organised some session players to provide background music.

11 OCTOBER 2024: THE CELTIC CLUB SENIORS CELEBRATION

Seniors Week Festival (it is the week public transport for seniors is free 06–13 October) features many events. The Celtic Club event, featuring Traditional Irish Food, Music, Songs & Genealogy attracted a sellout-crowd of participants (many of whom had never been to the Club) who enjoyed a discounted lunch, a genealogy session, a tour of the building and live music. It was booked out, 50 plus in the Bistro. The club had a massive waiting list.

The club submitted an application to be included in the official Seniors Week booklet (it printed 160,000 copies, and publicised events on its official website as well). Our entry was on page 43. The booklet was available at libraries and Coles stores.

Carmel spoke representing the Irish Ancestry Discussion Circle (of the Genealogical Society of Victoria)

Siobhan McKeever and Sean O'Neil have organised a large group of session players to perform.

01 FEBRUARY 2025: ST BRIGID'S DAY AT CELTIC CLUB

A celebration for the 40th Anniversary of women being accepted as full members in 1985 coincided with Brigid's day. Attendances were reasonable, especially at night. It was the CEO's first ever event at the club and he was impressed by it.

The club continues its tradition of organising and supporting events that celebrate Irish heritage and foster community engagement. Following the success of St Brigid's Day—an occasion that marked the 40th anniversary of women joining as full members—attention shifted to planning and participating in upcoming events. The calendar was soon marked by another gathering of note:

14 MARCH 2025: THE INAUGURAL CELTIC CLUB ST PATRICK'S BREAKFAST AT ZINC FEDERATION SQUARE

Frank Brennan was the guest speaker. He is a well-known Australian Jesuit priest, human rights lawyer and academic. Frank has a longstanding reputation of advocacy in the areas of law, social justice, refugee protection, reconciliation and human rights activism.

The Club has a copy of Frank's speech. Tinteán sought permission to publish it: <https://tinteán.org.au/2025/04/10/st-patricks-day-breakfast-address/>

06 APRIL 2025: THE KELLY SONG SINGLE LAUNCH

Viki Mealings (Brittle Sun) and Peter O'Shea composed a new song based on the Jerilderie letter by Australia's most iconic bushranger Ned Kelly.

This was an afternoon of Irish Australian poetry and music featuring Sean O'Callaghan, Michael Reynolds, Brittle Sun, Peter O'Shea and the Southern Fiddlers and Viki Mealings & Peter O'Shea.

'I am a Widow's Son, outlawed and my orders must be obeyed'. With these chilling words, bushranger Ned Kelly ended the Jerilderie letter, a detailed written justification of his actions in the year before his death.

Many CDs were sold by the performers.

22 APRIL 2025: POETRY READING BY ÁINE NÍ GHLIANN POET

Val Noone & Ronan McDonald organised this event. It was well attended.

Celtic Club past events

05 JUNE 2025: AN EVENING WITH MARY MORRISSEY

The Celtic Club continued its recent literary series of events with one featuring Mary Morrissey in the Members Bar on Thursday June 5th as Mary read from her recent works including *Penelope Unbound*, a novel re-imagining the life of Nora Barnacle, wife of author James Joyce" and her most recent collection of short fiction *Twenty-Twenty Vision*.

Dublin-born Mary Morrissey is the author of four novels, *Mother of Pearl*, *The Pretender*, *The Rising of Bella Casey* and *Penelope Unbound*, and three collections of stories, *A Lazy Eye*, *Prosperity Drive* and most recently *Twenty-Twenty Vision*. Her work has won a Hennessy Award for short fiction and a Lannan Literary Foundation Award.

Frances reviewed her latest novel *Penelope Unbound* and mentions this talk in *Tinteán* published on 10 June: <https://tinteán.org.au/2025/06/10/a-novel-for-the-bloomsday-season/>

15 JUNE 2025: THE CELTIC CLUB'S CELEBRATION OF BLOOMSDAY

This event at the Club was on Sunday afternoon 15 June. Ronan McDonald opened the proceedings and Stephen Regan was the MC.

There were Readings, Music, Trivia, etc. A reasonable crowd attended.

25 JUNE 2025: THE PIRATE QUEEN MUSICAL (A PREVIEW)

Performers were introduced to club members and sang four numbers on Wednesday 25 June with CEO Rob as the MC. The Musical, which features the story of Grace O'Malley, a 16th century Irish noblewoman and pirate ran at the Frankston Arts Centre in July.

27 JUNE 2025: INTERVIEW WITH CRIME WRITER, LIAM McILVANNEY, BY JASON STEGER

New Zealand crime writer, Liam McIlvanney was interviewed by Jason Steger, the former literary editor of *The Age*, on Friday 27 June to discuss and read from his stunning new psychological thriller - *The Good Father*. Liam was in Melbourne to attend an annual crime writer's conference.

Liam McIlvanney was born in Scotland and studied at the universities of Glasgow and Oxford. He is Stuart Professor of Scottish Studies at the University of Otago and a crime writer. He lives in Ōtepoti Dunedin with his wife and four sons. His late father William McIlvanney, is regarded as the father of Tartan Noir. Many Scots attended this event.



The Celtic Club Library

CURATING, HOUSING AND USING THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

The library team of Donald Barker, Eileen Mount, Mary Carroll, Jon O'Grady and Dave McKenna have continued to work on establishing the club library in our new venue. Because there is not the room we had at Queen Street the librarians have been culling our collection and the club held a Book Fair on Sunday 06 October to enable members and friends to be able to purchase items for a gold coin donation. The principles used to cull the Library involved the elimination of duplicates, and of books not deemed to be relevant to the Celtic Club Library's niche position in the world of libraries. The Board has agreed to new shelving and it has arrived.

The team have begun to put the catalogue of the library on the online Victorian Collections System which has the potential to bring this specialist library to a wider audience, thus enhancing its importance.

Mary Carroll's paper on the Library has been circulated to CHSC members interested in the future of the library. The CHSC will organise a group with an interest in seeing the library in use to decide on the purposes of the library and establish a system for borrowings.

Collaborations with Kindred Organisations

10 NOVEMBER 2024: 35 YEARS OF GLÓR NA NGAEAL

Club members promoted and attended a booked-out Celebration of 35 years of Glór na nGael - Voice of the Irish radio in Melbourne on Sunday 10 November 2024 at Batman's Hill on Collins.

This anniversary marked a proud milestone for the program and the rich cultural connection nurtured with the Irish community in Melbourne and beyond.

And it was an opportunity to thank former members of the Cultural Heritage Group, Eugene O'Rourke and Graeme Anderson who have (semi-) retired after 30 years of producing and hosting two Irish programmes per week. Eugene has also been very active in training radio panel-operators.

Live Irish music was provided by club member Pat McKernan, Melbourne Comhaltas & Ceoltóirí Naarm.

16 MARCH 2025: SAINT PATRICK'S FESTIVAL EDINBURGH GARDENS SUNDAY

The club held a stall and Peter organised some volunteers to give out vouchers for drinks at the Club: Carmel McEvey, Frances Devlin-Glass, & Ciaran Crehan. Rachel Ivory, the Cultural Events & Entertainment Manager also attended.

It was a cold wet day with a poor attendance compared to previous years. Many of the acts that were to perform were cancelled.

THEATRE, FILMS, BOOK LAUNCHES AND EXHIBITIONS ETC.

We assisted in the promotion of the following events by circulating their material to all Victorian Irish based organisations:

- Melbourne Irish Studies Seminar Series held at Newman College
- various Comhaltas and Irish Australian Support & Resource Bureau events
- the launch of the book *Sister Liguori: The Nun Who Divided a Nation* by Jeff Kildea, held at the II Gambero Restaurant and
- a great range of Club events.

24-27 OCTOBER 2024: IRISH FILM FESTIVAL MELBOURNE / CINEMA NOVA IN CARLTON

This event is a collaboration between the Irish Film Festival and the Celtic Club. The opening film was *That They May Face the Rising Sun* adapted from a novel by James McGahern was sponsored by the Club. The novel is a portrait of a year in the life of a rural Irish lakeside

community. The film was nominated for 11 awards, winning for Best Film, at the Irish Film & Television Awards in April 2024.

Frances assembled a team of reviewers for *Tinteán*, many of them CC members. *Tinteán*'s team of reviewers reviewed eight films from the festival in two tranches:

- <https://tinteán.org.au/2024/10/10/irish-film-festival-reviews-tarrac-dance-first-that-they-may-face-the-rising-sun/>
- <https://tinteán.org.au/2024/10/22/more-films-from-the-irish-film-festival/>

30 NOVEMBER 2024: THE ANNUAL EUREKA AWARD DINNER

Eureka Australia Descendants and Supporters Inc. mounted their annual Eureka Democracy Dinner, celebrating the 170th Anniversary of the 1854 Eureka Events with the presentation of the Eureka Democracy Award. The 2024 Eureka Democracy Award was presented to the former Member for Indi in the Australian Parliament Cathy McGowan, AO.

The Awardee of the Eureka Award, Cathy MacGowan, gave a speech about the role of the Independents in the House and how they can advance democracy and better engage communities on the issues that matter to them.

Barrie Cassidy was to be the guest speaker but he came down with COVID, the day before the dinner, so his friend and journalist Jim Brown delivered his speech.

Vice President Ronan McDonald officially represented the Club. *Tinteán* covered the event: <https://tinteán.org.au/2025/02/10/australian-democracyeureka-dinner-addresses/>

09 FEBRUARY 2025: THE BRIGIDFEST LUNCHEON, AT BATMAN ON COLLINS

The BrigidFest committee held its 23rd annual Luncheon featuring as the guest speaker Siobhan Dooley, publican of The Drunken Poet in Peel Street. The pub has the distinction of being chosen out of more than 1,500 pubs in 41 countries, as one of the 10 Best Irish Pubs in The World (Outside Ireland) by *The Irish Times*. The only venue in Australia to make the list!

Siobhan's topic was Irish Soft Power, and she spoke about the ways she makes emigrants feel at home, and the power of music and poetry to do that. The Q&A was especially interesting, and the His Excellency Tim Mawie was an honoured guest. It was a full house, and Siobhan's talk was published in *Tinteán*: <https://tinteán.org.au/2025/07/10/irish-soft-power-from-behind-the-bar/>

Collaborations with Kindred Organisations

06 APRIL 2025: BLOOMSDAY COURSES ON ULYSSES

In the lead-up to Bloomsday 2025, which featured a theatre piece on this episode, Frances Devlin-Glass and Steve Carey ran a fully subscribed day-long course on this most provocative chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, episode 15, Circe. The episode takes Bloom into some dark realities and into the underbelly of early twentieth-century Dublin, into a world surveilled by Dublin Castle, the Dublin Metropolitan Police as well as the British Army.

It is Joyce's most in-depth look at the nature of sexuality itself and how the new discipline of psychiatry was revolutionising it.

Bloomsday also ran two well-attended Introduction to *Ulysses* courses on 05 October 24 and 24 August 2025.

11-22 JUNE 2025: BLOOMSDAY IN MELBOURNE FESTIVAL AT FORTYFIVEDOWNSTAIRS (THEATRE), 45 FLINDERS LANE

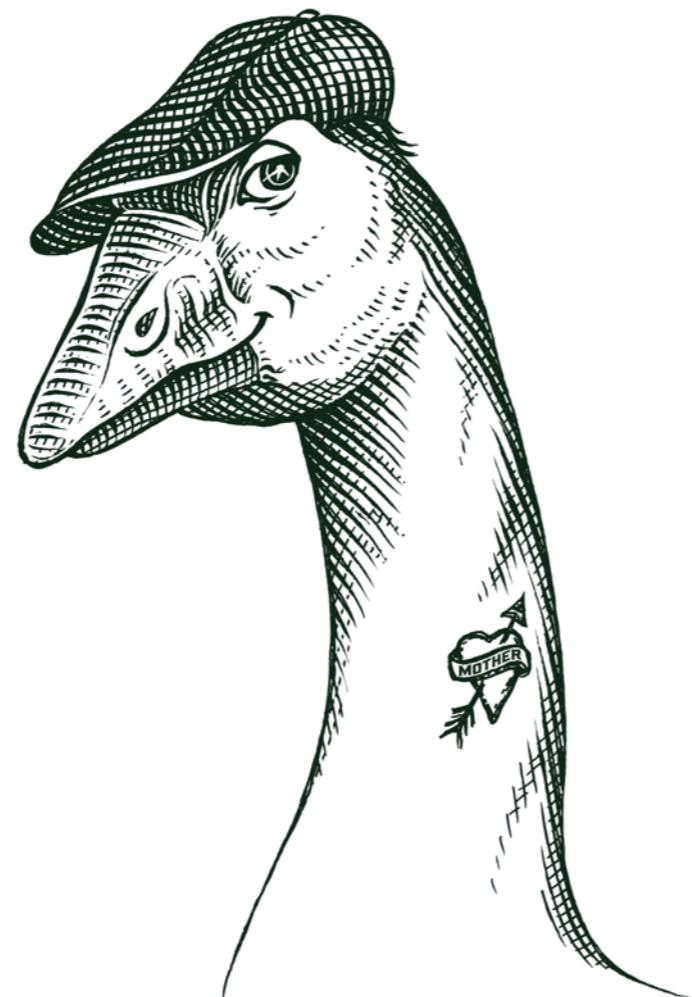
The Celtic Club through the CHSC promoted the 32nd Bloomsday in Melbourne Festival. In 2025, it featured a new and original adaptation for theatre, *Circe's Carnival of Vice*, of one of the more challenging episodes of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, 15, Circe. It oscillated between the gritty realism of the brothel scene in Dublin's Monto in 1904 (coloured also by his experience of brothel life in Paris), and Bloom's and Stephen's hallucinations at the end of a difficult day: Bloom faces his fears of losing Molly to Blazes Boylan, and his exclusion from mainstream Irish society, and Stephen encounters and repudiates the ghost of his dead mother.

The play was critically well-received and attended by in excess of 550 patrons. Most critics found the acting and staging to be high quality, and the costuming, a feature of the show, to be spectacular and to advance the gender-bending themes Joyce is exploring. A seminar designed to add value to the theatre experience was addressed by Dr Manuela Hrasky, FRANZCP, who deemed the novel to be the most ambitious and penetrating psychoanalytic fiction she'd encountered in a long career of clinical practice and reading. She was commissioned to provide a history of Sexology of the period and enlightened participants on Joyce's sources, especially Kraft-Ebing, Weininger, Havelock Ellis and Freud. The supporting paper by Daniel Boyle was on the history and culture of Monto and unpacked Joyce's controversial definition of Monto as a 'Womancity'.

TINTEÁN

Tinteán, the free, independent, online magazine for Irish Australia, continues to build a global readership. Readers from the Australia top the list (about 50%), followed by Ireland, US and UK. There were 63,500 views in the past twelve months (September 24 – August 25). The editorial team pitches to a well-informed (about Ireland and the diaspora) general reader, and they enjoy responses and contributions on a many topics. Irish language topics score well, as do film reviews, historical matters and genealogy. The *Tinteán* articles in the Archive, stretching back to the beginning of the online journal in 2012, also get used and downloaded frequently.

The magazine continually seeks writers, reviewers and editors of all ages, and it's collegial and mind-expanding work. Two of the editorial collective are Club members.



Our Thanks

I wish to thank all of our Cultural Heritage Group members, Frances Devlin-Glass, Eoin Killackey, Louise La Sala, Carmel McEvoy, Ronan McDonald, Siobhan McKeever, Colman O'Driscoll and Isla Sutherland for their dedication, commitment, and team spirit, which have enlivened the Club's cultural heritage programs over the past two decades. They were all appointed by the Committee of Management after an expression of interest process. Louise, Carmel, and Ronan are retiring from the Committee, while Vivien Lynch, a former Rose of Tralee winner for New Zealand and a marketing person, is joining the Committee.

I would also like to thank the Club's Board and staff for their support and encouragement.

Peter Gavin

Chair Cultural Heritage Group

BACKGROUND OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Peter Gavin

Has an MBA qualification, is Secretary of Eureka Australia Descendants and Supporters Inc., a former Member of the Parliament, former Secretary of the Club, a Veteran Member and Life Member of the Club and recipient of the 2005 Dr. Michael O'Sullivan Award.

Frances Devlin-Glass

An Honorary Associate Professor, Founder and Creative Director of Bloomsday in Melbourne programs, Editor, Australasian Journal of Irish Studies, a co-convenor of Melbourne Irish Studies Seminars at the University of Melbourne, on the editorial board of *Tinteán*, Member of the BrigidFest Committee, and a Life Member of the Club.

Professor Eóin Killackey

Aspiring gaeilgeoir (ach is tosaithear mór anois), clinical psychologist and Chief of Research & Knowledge Translation at Orygen. Eóin is keenly interested in understanding Irish heritage and promoting events that develop Irish identity.

Dr. Louise La Sala

Dr. Louise La Sala

Research Fellow (Youth Self-harm and Suicide Prevention, Online Safety), Orygen, Centre for Youth Mental Health, The University of Melbourne. Louise was an Irish dancer who danced at the club as a girl and now teaches at the Melbourne Academy of Irish Dance. Louise is a member of the Victorian Irish Dance Association, Australian Irish Dance Association, and An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha.

Carmel McEvoy

Carmel is on the Committee of the Irish Ancestry Discussion Circle of the Genealogical Society of Victoria, has taught family history research skills at U3A, and has a MA (Hons) in History of Family and a Certificate of Genealogical Methods from the University of Limerick.

Dr. Siobhan McKeever

Siobhan is a medical practitioner who now works part-time. She is passionate about Traditional Irish Music and is a regular participant at the Friday afternoon sessions at The Wild Geese. She plays the fiddle every week at the Last Jar in Carlton and connects with Irish musicians in country Victoria whenever possible.

Adj Prof Colman O'Driscoll

From Cork originally, Colman moved to Sydney in 2003 and then relocated to Melbourne in 2023 with his wife and son. He is a long-term Irish musician and spent his early days as a flute player learning from piper Sean McKiernan and flute players Padraig Kelleher and Seamus Tansey. Since coming to Australia Colman has worked in senior leadership roles across the health sector and is now the Chief Executive at Forensicare.

Isla Sutherland

A content and communications specialist for a global architecture and design firm. Isla's expertise includes strategic content development, writing for print and digital genres, industry engagement and program delivery. Isla is passionate about sharing Celtic culture and traditions with contemporary Australian audiences.

Ronan McDonald

Ronan holds the Gerry Higgins Chair of Irish Studies at the University of Melbourne. He is co-convenor of the Melbourne Irish Studies Seminar. He is Vice President of the Celtic Club.



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Treasurer's Report

For the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2025

The financial year to 30 June 2025 marked the first full year of trading at our new home, the Wild Geese Hotel, and brought a period of rapid growth, significant member engagement, and continued investment in the Club's long-term future.

Club Structure and Governance

The Celtic Club operates as a group structure comprising Celtic Club Inc (CCI) and its wholly owned subsidiary, Celtic Club Hotel Pty Ltd (CCH). CCI is the principal not-for-profit association, responsible for overall governance, asset ownership, strategic direction and compliance. CCH, meanwhile, manages the Club's hospitality venue and day-to-day trading operations at the Wild Geese Hotel, enabling dedicated focus on service delivery and efficient venue management. This arrangement allows the Club to separate core association activities from commercial hospitality operations while ensuring strong financial oversight and compliance across both entities. All board members of CCI and the two directors of CCH serve in voluntary capacities, with no remuneration paid for their roles.

A Year of Growth and Consolidation

Following our milestone venue launch last year, FY25 saw the Celtic Club cement its position within the local hospitality scene. The Club delivered strong revenue performance, with consolidated trading income rising to \$2,109,475 across all activities, including food and beverage sales of \$2,055,686 and service provision revenue of \$53,789. The Limerick Arms hotel continues to perform as a solid asset, yielding annual rental income of \$236,693.

Interest and investment income totalled \$431,312, buoyed by prudent cash management and high-interest deposits. Other income, including government reimbursements, insurance receipts, and membership subscriptions, reached \$138,465. These strengthened the member base and further positioned the Club as a centre for Irish and broader Celtic community activity.

Importantly, this has also been our first full year proudly free of poker machines in decades. The Board's decision to end gaming operations reflects our commitment not to profit from gambling and to ensure our venue provides a positive, modern environment for all members. By surrendering our electronic gaming licences under the Victorian Government's 2023 surrender scheme, the Club has not only made the right social choice but also a sound financial one. We are grateful for members' strong support of this direction.

Investment in Operations

Establishing day-to-day operations at the Wild Geese Hotel required ongoing investment in staffing, training, and operational systems. Operational expenses included \$1,442,791 allocated to wages and employee benefits, with

further outlays such as \$839,663 for venue operations and building costs, \$364,166 for consulting fees, and \$445,434 for rental expenses. Additional investments in marketing and community events contributed to meaningful engagement and supported the Club's ongoing growth.

Through the financial year, we continued learning and adapting as we engaged our members and tested our market. This process delivered tangible results, with operating costs reducing month by month compared with July last year, and revenue steadily increasing over the same period. As expected for our first full year of operations, total expenses exceeded income due to continued investment in people, systems, and venue fit out. The Club recorded a consolidated net loss of \$1,145,731 for the year, reflecting the cost required to build a sustainable future from a strong foundation.

Community and Member Engagement

The Club remains focused on delivering quality experiences for members. This year saw successful signature events, including the Rugby Lunch and St Patrick's Day celebrations, as well as increased bookings for private functions. Membership revenue grew, and new operational systems delivered best-in-class service standards. Importantly, the Club remains debt-free, with consolidated assets, including bank holdings and ownership of the Limerick Arms hotel, providing ongoing financial strength and security.

Looking Forward

The Board is proud of the achievements in FY25, which have set the stage for a period of renewal and expansion. We continue to balance prudent cost management with optimisation of our operations, while working hard to increase community engagement and attract members and guests to our venue. We are confident that the coming year will bring increased turnover and improved profitability as our venue matures and our strategy delivers ever-greater benefits to members and the wider community.

We thank our management team, staff, members, bookkeeper, and advisory partners for their tireless support and commitment. We urge all members to visit, enjoy our hospitality, and participate in our vibrant events schedule, ensuring the Club's long-term sustainability and a bright future for all.

Finally, I am available via email for any questions members may have, and I am also happy to meet in person at the Club by arrangement.

For and on behalf of the Board,

Lynda Meredith

Celtic Club Treasurer

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Sales revenue		
3	2,109,475	721,305
Cost of goods sold		
	(784,716)	(273,044)
Gross profit		
	1,324,759	448,261
Investment income		
3	431,312	345,495
Rental income		
	236,693	231,055
Other income		
3	138,465	90,098
Employee benefits expense		
	(1,442,791)	(634,983)
Consulting fees		
	(364,166)	(510,125)
Rental expense		
	(445,434)	(204,340)
Depreciation and amortisation		
	(184,906)	(111,522)
Other expenses		
	(839,663)	(556,471)
Loss from continuing operations		
	(1,145,731)	(902,532)
Loss for the year		
	(1,145,731)	(902,532)

Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2025

		2025	2024	
	Note	\$	\$	2025
ASSETS				
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	4	856,615	1,179,101	Balance at 1 July 2024
Trade and other receivables	5	55,329	122,849	Loss during the year
Inventories		82,828	68,798	Balance at 30 June 2025
Other financial assets	6.	7,997,146	8,591,839	
Other assets	7	13,030	55,385	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		9,004,948	10,017,972	2024
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Property, plant and equipment	8	6,533,958	6,662,309	Balance at 1 July 2023
Intangible assets	9	23,100	38,747	Loss during the year
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		6,557,058	6,701,056	Balance at 30 June 2024
TOTAL ASSETS		15,562,006	16,719,028	
LIABILITIES				
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Trade and other payables	10	222,286	249,039	
Employee benefits	11	40,287	24,825	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		262,573	273,864	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		262,573	273,864	
NET ASSETS		15,299,433	16,445,164	
EQUITY				
Reserves		19,404,099	19,404,099	
Accumulated deficit		(4,104,666)	(2,958,935)	
TOTAL EQUITY		15,299,433	16,445,164	

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Accumulated Deficit	Asset	
		Revaluation Reserve	Total
	\$ (2,958,935)	\$ 19,404,099	\$ 16,445,164
	(1,145,731)	-	(1,145,731)
	(4,104,666)	19,404,099	15,299,433

	Accumulated Deficit	Asset	
		Revaluation Reserve	Total
	\$ (2,056,403)	\$ 19,404,099	\$ 17,347,696
	(902,532)	-	(902,532)
	(2,958,935)	19,404,099	16,445,164

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024	
	Note	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers			
Payments to suppliers and employees	2,795,126	1,051,371	
Interest and dividends received	(4,092,968)	(2,502,668)	
Net cash used in operating activities	14	<u>431,312</u>	<u>345,494</u>
		<u>(866,530)</u>	<u>(1,105,803)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Payment for intangible asset	-	(31,500)	
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(50,650)	(1,299,823)	
Impact of lease purchase correction	-	412,056	
Redemption on term deposits	594,694	1,773,346	
Net cash provided by investing activities	544,044	<u>854,079</u>	
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents held	(322,486)	(251,724)	
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,179,101	1,430,825	
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	4	<u>856,615</u>	<u>1,179,101</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

The financial statements cover The Celtic Club Inc and Controlled Entities ('the Group'). The Celtic Club Inc and Controlled Entities is a not-for-profit Association incorporated and domiciled in Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 ('the Act').

Each of the entities within the Group prepare their financial statements based on the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates (functional currency). The consolidated financial statements are presented in Australian dollars which is the parent entity's functional and presentation currency.

Certain comparative figures have been adjusted or reclassified in order to conform to the current year's presentation.

1. Basis of Preparation

In the opinion of the Committee of Management, the Association is not a reporting entity since there are unlikely to be users of the financial statements who are not able to command the preparation of reports tailored so as to satisfy specifically all of their information needs. These special purpose financial statements have been prepared to meet the reporting requirements of the Act.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards and Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*, AASB 107 *Statement of Cash Flows*, AASB 108 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* and AASB 1054 *Australian Additional Disclosures*.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

Material accounting policy information relating to the preparation of these financial statements are presented below, and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

2. Material Accounting Policy Information

(a) Basis for consolidation

The consolidated financial statements include the financial position and performance of controlled entities from the date on which control is obtained until the date that control is lost.

All controlled entities have the same financial year end as the parent.

Subsidiaries

Subsidiaries are all entities (including structured entities) over which the parent has control. Control is established when the parent is exposed to, or has rights to variable returns from its involvement with the entity and has the ability to affect those returns through its power to direct the relevant activities of the entity.

(b) Revenue and other income

Revenue from contracts with customers

Revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of control of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Group expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services.

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2. Material Accounting Policy Information

(b) Revenue and other income

Revenue from contracts with customers

Generally the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Group have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

Specific revenue streams

The revenue recognition policies for the principal revenue streams of the Group are:

Sale of goods

Revenue is recognised on transfer of goods to the customer as this is deemed to be the point in time when risks and rewards are transferred and there is no longer any ownership or effective control over the goods.

Provision of services

Revenue is recognised when the event takes place or over time as the performance obligations are progressively satisfied.

Rental income

Rental income is recognised on a straight-line basis over a period of the lease term so as to reflect a constant periodic rate of return on the net investment.

Interest income

Interest income is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

Other income

Other income is recognised on an accruals basis when the Association is entitled to it.

(c) Income tax

The Association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2. Material Accounting Policy Information

(d) Inventories

Inventories are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Cost of inventory is determined using the first-in-first-out basis and is net of any rebates and discounts received. Net realisable value is estimated using the most reliable evidence available at the reporting date and inventory is written down through an obsolescence provision if necessary.

(e) Property, plant and equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Items of property, plant and equipment acquired for significantly less than fair value have been recorded at the acquisition date fair value.

Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset's useful life to the Group, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

Leased assets and leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or their estimated useful life.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset are shown below:

Fixed asset class	Depreciation rate
Buildings	2.5%
Plant and Equipment	10% to 33%

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2. Material Accounting Policy Information

(f) Financial instruments

Financial assets

All recognised financial assets are subsequently measured in their entirety at either amortised cost or fair value, depending on the classification of the financial assets.

Classification

On initial recognition, the Group classifies its financial assets into the following categories, those measured at:

- amortised cost

Amortised cost

The Group's financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise trade and other receivables and cash and cash equivalents in the statement of financial position.

Trade receivables

Impairment of trade receivables have been determined using the simplified approach in AASB 9 which uses an estimation of lifetime expected credit losses.

The amount of the impairment is recorded in a separate allowance account with the loss being recognised in finance expense. Once the receivable is determined to be uncollectable then the gross carrying amount is written off against the associated allowance.

Where the Group renegotiates the terms of trade receivables due from certain customers, the new expected cash flows are discounted at the original effective interest rate and any resulting difference to the carrying value is recognised in profit or loss.

Financial liabilities

The Group measures all financial liabilities initially at fair value less transaction costs, subsequently financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2. Material Accounting Policy Information

(g) Leases

Leases of fixed assets where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset, but not the legal ownership that are transferred to the Association are classified as finance leases.

Finance leases are capitalised by recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the amounts equal to the fair value of the leased property or the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for the period.

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all of the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease term.

Lease incentives under operating leases are recognised as a liability and amortised on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease term.

(h) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Group's liability for employee benefits, those benefits that are expected to be wholly settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

3. Revenue and Other Income

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Sales revenue		
- sale of goods	2,055,686	683,897
- provision of services	53,789	37,408
Total sales revenue	2,109,475	721,305
Investment income		
- interest	412,168	326,502
- dividends	19,144	18,993
Total investment income	431,312	345,495
Other income		
- reimbursements	92,311	52,880
- subscriptions	24,621	19,530
- gratuities	-	971
- Others	21,533	16,717
Total other income	138,465	90,098

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

4. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Cash at bank and in hand	856,615	1,179,101
Total cash and cash equivalents	856,615	1,179,101

5. Trade and Other Receivables

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Trade receivables	42,281	66,873
GST and PAYG refund	538	314
Other receivables	12,510	55,662
Total current trade and other receivables	55,329	122,849

6. Other Financial Assets

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Capital notes	365,185	365,185
Term Deposits		
Other financial asset	7,631,961	8,226,654
	7,997,146	8,591,839

7. Other Assets

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Prepayments	13,030	35,385
Lease guarantee deposit	-	20,000
Total other current assets	13,030	55,385

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

8. Property, Plant and Equipment

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Freehold land and Building		
At cost	5,692,816	5,665,729
Accumulated depreciation	(262,213)	(195,168)
Total Freehold land and building	5,430,603	5,470,561
Plant and equipment		
At cost	405,670	385,818
Accumulated depreciation	(109,314)	(32,665)
Total plant and equipment	296,356	353,153
Furniture, fixtures and fittings		
At cost	184,879	184,879
Accumulated depreciation	(24,251)	(6,119)
Total furniture, fixtures and fittings	160,628	178,760
Computer equipment		
At cost	4,977	3,096
Accumulated depreciation	(1,603)	(301)
Total computer equipment	3,374	2,795
Leasehold Improvements		
At cost	664,152	662,321
Accumulated amortisation	(21,155)	(5,281)
Total leasehold improvements	642,997	657,040
Total property, plant and equipment	6,533,958	6,662,309

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9. Intangible Assets

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Licenses and franchises		
Cost	9,347	9,347
Accumulated amortisation and impairment	(9,347)	-
Net carrying value	-	9,347
Computer software		
Cost	31,500	31,500
Accumulated amortisation and impairment	(8,400)	(2,100)
Net carrying value	23,100	29,400
Gaming entitlements		
Cost	934,889	934,889
Written off during the year	(934,889)	(934,889)
Accumulated amortisation and impairment		
Written off during the year	(934,889)	(934,889)
Net carrying value	-	-
Total intangible assets	23,100	38,747

10. Trade and Other Payables

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Trade payables	108,193	152,390
Other payables	114,093	96,649
Total trade and other payables	222,286	249,039

11. Employee Benefits

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Short-term benefits	40,287	24,825

Notes to the Financial Statements continued...

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

12. Interests in Subsidiary

Composition of the Group

Principal place of business / Country of Incorporation	Percentage Owned (%)*	Percentage Owned (%)*
	2025	2024
Celtic Club Hotel Pty Ltd	100	100

Subsidiary:

Celtic Club Hotel Pty Ltd

Australia

*The percentage of ownership interest held is equivalent to the percentage voting rights for all subsidiaries.

13. Contingencies

In the opinion of those charged with governance, the Association did not have any contingencies at 30 June 2025 (30 June 2024:None).

14. Cash Flow Information

Reconciliation of result for the year to cashflows from operating activities

Reconciliation of net income to net cash provided by operating activities:

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Loss for the year	(1,145,731)	(902,532)
Cash flows excluded from profit attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in loss:		
- depreciation and amortisation	194,648	111,522
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	67,520	(89,026)
- (increase)/decrease in other assets	42,355	9,491
- (increase)/decrease in inventories	(14,030)	(68,798)
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(26,753)	(191,285)
- increase/(decrease) in employee benefits	15,461	24,825
Cashflow from operations	(866,530)	(1,105,803)

15. Statutory Information

The registered office and principal place of business of the association is:

The Celtic Club Incorporated
PO Box 276
Brunswick VIC 3056

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Celtic Club Inc and Controlled Entities

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

OPINION

We have audited the financial report of The Celtic Club Inc and Controlled Entities (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of income and expenditure, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information, and the statement by members of the committee.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

EMPHASIS OF MATTER - BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

We draw attention to Notes 1 and 2 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of preparation and the material accounting policy information. The financial statements have been prepared to assist the Association to meet its reporting obligations to members under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The Committee of Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Group or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Group's financial reporting process.

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Celtic Club Inc and Controlled Entities continued...

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance.

Standards Board website at: www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar3.pdf

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

BG Assurance Pty Ltd

BG Assurance Pty Ltd, Chartered Accountants
Authorised audit company number 294178
(ACN 115 749 598)

Andrew Fisher

Andrew Fisher FCA, Partner
Registration number 306364

Melbourne, Australia
30 October 2025

Declaration by Members of the Board of Management

The Members of the Board of Management ('the Board') of The Celtic Club Incorporated and Controlled Entities ('the Group') declare that in the Board's opinion:

- (a) the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and give a true and fair view of the position of the Group as at 30 June 2025 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the basis of presentation described in Note 1 to the financial statements; and
- (b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable.



Patrick McGorry, President



Lynda Meredith, Treasurer

Melbourne, Australia
30 October 2025





Providing a warm welcome since 1887

29 Sydney Road, Brunswick VIC 3056
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