ROG
Recovery Oversight Group

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

CHAIR: Nóirín Hegarty

VP, Digital Content and Operations Director, Ireland, Lonely Planet

Nóirín Hegarty is Vice President, Digital Content and Operations Director, Ireland with Lonely Planet, a leading global travel media publisher and the world's number one travel guidebook brand.

Over the past four decades Lonely Planet has printed over 150 million guidebooks and grown a passionate global community of travellers. Nóirín joined the business in London in 2013, where she led a team that managed over 250 freelance writers in 46 countries. She moved back to Dublin in 2015 to establish Lonely Planet Global Limited, which became a global publisher for the business.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, she initiated a daily travel news service and then devised and launched a new digital content strategy for the business in 2019. She is a board member of Tourism Ireland.

Previously, she was Editor of the Sunday Tribune, an award-winning Irish national newspaper and Editor of independent.ie, a leading Irish news website.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Ruth Andrews

CEO – ITOA, Chairperson ITIC and special advisor to AVEA

With a career spanning over 30 years in Irish tourism, Ruth commenced her career in the Hotel sector in the mid-eighties working as a marketing/sales professional in some of Irelands then largest hotel chains – Doyle Hotel and Great Southern Hotel Groups. She established her own tourism marketing/sales consultancy service in the late '90's, providing marketing communications, coaching & mentoring and business development expertise to a wide range of Irish Tourism industry businesses in almost all sectors.

She is currently Chief Executive for the ITOA – Incoming Tour Operators Association, a position she has held since 2006. ITOA represents the leading inbound tour operators in Ireland who bring in excess of 750,000 international visitors to Ireland annually.

In 2017 she was appointed Special Advisor to AVEA – The Association of Visitor Experience and Attractions to establish the association and now manages the executive function of the organisation with over 100 members. She has served and continues to serve on many industry advisory boards.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Paul Gallagher

GM, Buswells Hotel, Dublin

Paul Gallagher, Fellow of the Irish Hospitality Institute, is the General Manager of Buswells Hotel, Dublin.

He is a Past President of the Irish Hotels Federation and past Chair of ITIC. Currently he is chair of the Central Marketing Partnership on behalf of Tourism Ireland and is a member of the Brexit taskforce.

Paul is a non-executive director of the Convention Centre Dublin and Vice Chairman of Original Irish Hotels.

As well as serving on the Government's Advisory Group on Small Business, he served as a member of the Grow Dublin Taskforce.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Niall Gibbons

CEO – Tourism Ireland

Niall Gibbons is Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland. He oversees the marketing of the island of Ireland across the world, leading a team of over 160 staff in 21 markets, whose work is underpinned by sustainable destination marketing principles. Over 11 million overseas visitors in 2019 contributed over €5.8BN to the island economies and supported 325,000 jobs.

He led Tourism Ireland's expansion into new markets such as China and the Middle East, and oversaw the organisation's emergence as a leader in digital marketing and social media. He developed ground-breaking partnerships with LucasFilm and HBO which allowed Tourism Ireland to leverage the global success of Star Wars and Game of Thrones to showcase the island of Ireland overseas, in new ways.

He led the development of Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative, which has brought tourism to the heart of St Patrick's Day celebrations around the world. The World Economic Forum has ranked Ireland 3rd in the world out of 136 countries for 'effectiveness of marketing and branding to attract tourists'.

Niall is a business graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland. He sits on the Irish Government's Export Trade Council, has been a member of the post-Covid Tourism Recovery Taskforces in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, is a member of Culture Ireland's Expert Advisory Committee and an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality in Ireland.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Helena Healy

CEO, B&B Ireland

Helena Healy is the CEO of B&B Ireland, a marketing and promotional company for the Irish B&B sector. B&B Ireland is a membership based organisation set up to service the business and promotional needs of its members.

Helena had almost 25 years' experience working in Irish tourism. She is responsible for the strategic direction and business development of B&B Ireland.

An experienced tourism professional with a demonstrated history of working in the leisure, travel & tourism industry. Skilled in Online Advertising, Management, Business Development, Marketing Strategy, and Online Marketing. Helena holds a Master's in Business from The University of Huddersfield and various qualifications in the areas of digital marketing and training.

Helena is married to Pat, they have two grown up children.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Paul Kelly

CEO – Fáilte Ireland

Paul Kelly is the Chief Executive of Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority. Paul leads Fáilte Ireland as it builds on the success of brands and initiatives including the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. He sets the strategic direction for Fáilte Ireland to significantly shape the future development of the tourism industry, and the key priorities are driving balanced and sustainable regional and seasonal growth to best generate increased employment, exchequer and an even bigger contribution to the national economy.

Paul was appointed to the post in February 2017 and brings extensive management and marketing leadership experience following a lengthy career in marketing.

He is a native of Wexford and a Commerce graduate from the University College Dublin. Prior to his appointment he started his career with Procter & Gamble UK, Paul then went on to hold senior executive positions with Diageo Ireland, Aviva and the UCD Smurfit Business School. During his career, he was also involved in the development of many of the most iconic and best-known Irish and international marketing campaigns.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Maria Melia

PO, Tourism Policy and Marketing Division, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Maria Melia has held the position of Principal of the Tourism Policy and Marketing division of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media since 2016.

Maria's has a wide variety of experience in the civil and public service and previously held the position of Director of Service with Kilkenny County Council and with Wexford County Council.

She also served as a senior manager in the Programme Management Office of the Local Government Management Agency overseeing the implementation of the local government reform programme.

Maria has a degree in civil engineering and professional certificate in Corporate Governance.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Rob Rankin

MD, Vagabond Tours

Founder and owner of Vagabond Tours, Ireland's leading small-group tour company and also owner of Sustainable Travel Ireland, which trains and certifies tourism businesses, Rob is also the President of the ITOA (Incoming Tour Operators Association Ireland) and was the founding chairman of the IAAT (Ireland's Association of Adventure Tourism).

But his real job is a father of three.

Rob is a passionate advocate for a sustainable business model that supports the health of communities and the environment, which is essential to long term success of the tourism industry.

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MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

Aisling Reynolds-Feighan

Professor of Transport Economics and College Vice Principal for Research Innovation and Impact at the UCD College of Social Sciences & Law

Aisling Reynolds-Feighan has worked as a transport economist for more than 30 years.

She is Professor of Transport Economics at UCD. Aisling has worked as a transport consultant/expert to the US Department of Transportation, the OECD, European Commission and Irish Department of Transport, Economic & Social Research Institute, Irish Exporters Association and DKM Economic Consultants.

She was a member of the EU's FP7 and FP6 Expert Advisory Panels in Transport. Aisling has published extensively on air and road transport economics in the leading international transportation research journals.

Aisling has presented to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport, and contributes regularly to public debate on transport matters through TV, radio and print media outlets. She was Chair of the Regional Science Association International British and Irish Section, 2013-2017.