

Oireachtas Update



In the Dáil this week, statements will be made in relation to a report on offshore oil and gas Exploration. Amongst the bills on the agenda in the Dáil is the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Bill 2012 which will be discussed at second stage. Statements will be made in the Seanad this week on the recently published OCED Review of the Irish Pensions System. This report suggested that Ireland should make its pension system simpler and fairer so that everyone gets sufficient income for a decent standard of living in retirement. The Committee on Health and Children will meet on Friday to discuss the Public Hearings on the Heads of Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill 2013.

News and public sector appointments

New Chairperson appointed to HIQA

Authority also publishes first child protection and welfare inspection report

Minister for Health James Reilly TD has announced the appointment of Mr Brian McEnergy as the new Chairperson of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

Mr McEnergy is a qualified accountant and currently a Partner with BDO Consulting (Corporate Finance and Healthcare). He is the lead partner in healthcare consulting dealing in particular with older person care, primary care and acute care (March 2012 to date) and was previously responsible for the financial management of the corporate finance and restructuring area of the firm. He is a member of the Board of NAMA and Chair of its Audit Committee. He is a former Chair and President of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and member of its Global Council and a former lecturer for ACCA in Strategic Management. Mr McEnergy is also a member of the Limerick Institute of Technology Foundation and Limerick City of Culture Committee.

The Minister welcomed the appointment and commended the outgoing Chairperson Pat McGrath whom he said made a "significant contribution as Chairperson of HIQA since its inception six years ago."

New inspection regime

HIQA has also published its first report under its new regime aimed at strengthening and improving Ireland's child protection and welfare services. The report, HSE Child Protection and Welfare Service in Carlow/Kilkenny, is the first in a series of reports into Ireland's child protection and welfare services that will be published by the Authority.

According to Phelim Quinn, Director of Regulation with HIQA, the Authority now inspects HSE Children and Family Services to measure its compliance with the National Standards for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The Authority is also assessing the implementation by the HSE of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). The Authority will report on its findings publicly and, as part of this process, we hope to promote improvements in these services."

Mr Quinn added that in this particular report, "while finding that services provided to children were safe overall, there were a range of non-compliance issues identified during the inspection process. It is essential that the national service learns from the outcomes of this inspection and takes all steps possible to deliver protection and support for vulnerable children".

Two additional Supreme Court judges to be appointed

Backlog in Supreme Court deemed damaging to society and the economy

The Government has approved proposals to allow for the appointment of an additional two Supreme Court judges, bringing the total number of ordinary judges to nine (plus the Chief Justice).

With the average delay for new non-priority cases before the Supreme Court now approximately four years, the aim of these appointments is to alleviate these waiting times in the Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeal.

The necessary legislative amendment will be brought forward in the Courts Bill 2013 which is currently awaiting committee stage and will be enacted in the coming weeks.

The situation in the Supreme Court was recently highlighted on March 2 2013 by the Chief Justice in a speech to the Seminar on Constitutional Reform during which she warned that the severe delays in the courts could have repercussions for society and the economy and said the situation was "unsustainable, untenable and it cannot be defended".

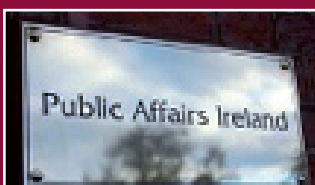
These appointments will facilitate the Chief Justice arranging for additional court sittings later in the year to address the appeal backlog that has developed, including the scheduling of several sittings of the Court of

Criminal Appeal and for the Supreme Court to sit routinely on a divisional basis.

The Chief Justice has indicated that the appointments, together with efficiency measures already introduced, will help reduce delays and the financial, economic and reputational risks associated with delay.

Welcoming the Government decision, Minister Shatter said "It is vital that litigants can vindicate their right of access to justice. The waiting periods in the Supreme Court list are negating the efficient throughput achieved in the High Court, particularly in the Commercial Court list." Increasing the number of judges, according to the Minister "will underpin the ongoing process of court reform which is essential to maintaining our competitiveness and upholding citizens' rights under both the Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights."

Last week the Government agreed that a Referendum be held in autumn on the the proposed Constitutional Amendment to create a new Court of Appeal on Human Rights."



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Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform appointed

CIO will have responsibility for progressing the implementation of the ICT strategy for Government and the wider public service

Mr Bill McCluggage has been appointed as Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The CIO Council, chaired by the Department, is a representative forum for senior managers with responsibility for ICT and eGovernment.

McCluggage was previously Director of eGovernment and then CIO for Northern Ireland and led the development and successful implementation of a range of strategies that have transformed Northern Ireland's public services' interface with the citizen and the delivery of public sector back offices services. As Deputy Government CIO in the Cabinet Office in London, he led a multi-disciplinary team which developed Government's national ICT strategy. He holds a BSc in Electrical Engineering from Queen's University, Belfast and an MSc in Aerosystems Engineering. He is a member of the Institute of Engineering, Technology & Chartered Engineers and is a fellow of the British Computer Society and is a Visiting

Professor at the University of Ulster.

Mr McCluggage, who will report to the Secretary General of the Department, Robert Watt, will have responsibility for the strategic direction of technology in support of the wider mission and strategic change objectives in the Public Sector. The new CIO will lead the CIO Council and drive the implementation of the eGovernment and Cloud Computing strategies.

Following his appointment, Mr McCluggage said, "I look forward to the opportunity to work with the CIO Council, colleagues across Government and industry, and with the senior management team in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform under Minister Brendan Howlin and Secretary General Robert Watt to make a tangible difference to the delivery of public services across Ireland through effective use of technology, eGovernment and Cloud computing."

Oireachtas Schedule: Week beginning May 13

Dáil

Tuesday May 14	Wednesday May 15	Thursday May 16
<p>2pm Questions (Minister for Health)</p> <p>3.15pm Leaders Questions</p> <p>3.36pm Questions (Taoiseach)</p> <p>4.36pm Order of Business</p> <p>5.06pm Topical Issues</p> <p>Statements re Report on Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)</p> <p>7.30pm Private Members Business</p>	<p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Bill 2013 Second Stage Resumed (Department of Justice and Equality)</p> <p>Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Bill 2012 Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)</p> <p>1.30pm SOS</p> <p>2.30pm Questions (Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport)</p> <p>3.45pm Topical Issues</p> <p>7.30pm Private Members Business</p>	<p>10.30am Leaders Questions</p> <p>10.51am Order of Business</p> <p>Taxi Regulation Bill 2012 (Seanad) Second Stage (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport)</p> <p>Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Bill 2012 Second Stage (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)</p> <p>3.42pm Topical Issues</p> <p>4.30pm Questions (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade)</p>

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Seanad

Tuesday May 14	Wednesday May 15	Thursday May 16
<p>2.30pm Order of Business</p> <p>3.45 pm Taxi Regulation Bill 2012 – Report Stage [Minister of State for Public and Commuter Transport] Spokesperson Senator Pat O'Neill</p>	<p>10.30am Order of Business</p> <p>11.45am Statements on Wind Energy [Minister of State for Housing and Planning] Spokesperson Senator Cait Keane</p> <p>3pm Statements on the OCED Review of the Irish Pensions System [Minister for Social Protection] Spokesperson Senator Fidelma Healy Eames</p> <p>4pm Private Members Business – Seanad Reform Bill 2013- Katherine Zappone/Feargal Quinn Spokesperson Senator Tom Sheahan</p>	<p>10.30 am Order of Business</p> <p>11.45 am Address to Seanad Éireann by Jim Higgins MEP</p>

Committee Meetings

Tuesday May 14	Wednesday May 15	Thursday May 16	Friday May 17
<p>1.30pm Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals; Schedule A: COM(2013)161; COM(2013)162; and Schedule B: Non-Priority Proposals; and (ii) The operations of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO's) [Representatives of the Association of County and City Councils]</p> <p>2pm Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Scrutiny of EU legislative proposals: Schedule A: COM(2013)226; COM(2013)159; Schedule B: Non-priority proposals: COM(2013)137; COM(2013)185; COM(2013)187; COM(2013)188; COM(2013)189; COM(2013)190; and (ii) Reports on Save Our Forests: The social, economic and environmental case against selling Coillte assets and Assessment of the Consequences of the Proposed Sale of Coillte's Timber Harvesting Rights [Representatives from IMPACT]</p> <p>2.15pm Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Housing of members of the traveller community by Local Authorities [Officials from Cork County Council; Dublin City Council; Fingal County Council and representatives of Pavee Point Travellers Centre]</p> <p>5pm Health and Children Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting</p>	<p>9.30am Justice, Defence and Equality Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2013 [Minister for Justice and Equality]</p> <p>11.30am Administration (Joint sub-Committee) Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting</p> <p>1pm Education and Social Protection Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Rent Allowance [Department of Social Protection]</p> <p>2pm Public Expenditure and Reform (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Construction Contracts Bill 2010 [Minister of State with special responsibility for the OPW and Public Service Reform]</p> <p>4pm and 5pm Public Service Oversight and Petitions Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: (a) 4 pm Private (b) 5pm Public Petitions received</p>	<p>2.15pm Environment, Community and Local Government (Sub-Committee) Committee Room 3, Leinster House AGENDA: Non-Use of Motor Vehicles Bill 2013 [Minister for the NewEra Project]</p> <p>2pm European Union Affairs Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Recommendations to the Irish EU Presidency [Mr Colm O'Gorman, Executive Director and Dr Nicolas J Berger, Director, Amnesty International]</p> <p>9.30am Health and Children Committee Room 2, Leinster House AGENDA: Private Meeting</p> <p>11.30am Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement Committee Room 4, Leinster House AGENDA: Narrow Water Bridge [Warrenpoint Chamber of Commerce and Dundalk Chamber of Commerce]</p> <p>10am Public Accounts Committee Room 1, Leinster House AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and (ii) 2011 Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: a. Vote 20: An Garda Síochána; and b. Chapter 26: Collection of Motor Taxation [Mr Martin Callinan, Commissioner, An Garda Síochána and Officials from Departments of the Environment, Community and Local Government and from Transport, Tourism and Sport]</p>	<p>9.30am Health and Children Seanad Chamber AGENDA: Public Hearings on the Heads of Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill 2013:</p> <p>Session A: 9.30am Policy - Overview of Heads of Bill</p> <p>Session B: 11.15am Regulatory and Representative Bodies</p> <p>Session C: 2.30pm Obstetric Care Facilities - Larger Hospitals</p> <p>Session D: 5.15pm Obstetric Care Facilities - Smaller Hospitals</p>