

ESRI ANNUAL REPORT 2017



The Council is the Institute's overall governing body and acts as its board of directors. In association with the director and staff, the Council is responsible for the development of the Institute's research strategy. The Council meets quarterly and is supported by its three sub-committees: Audit and Risk, Business and Operations, and Nominations. Section 7 provides a short biography of Council Members.

The Council

MEMBERS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017



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Chair***



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) aims to advance evidence-based policymaking that supports economic sustainability and social progress in Ireland. The Council of the ESRI supports this work by setting and overseeing the Institute's strategic objectives, establishing the required quality standards and ensuring that the independent analysis provided by the Institute remains relevant to the economic and social issues facing policymakers in Ireland today. While the Council is responsible for internal governance, Council members play no role in preparing or commenting on specific research.

This Introduction sets out the Council's views on how the Institute maintains its reputation as a centre for excellence in independent policy-focused research. It also includes a brief overview of the Institute's governance and its research output in 2017, the fourth year of its 2014–2018 research strategy.

Independence and Funding

The Institute's research strategy reaffirms the importance of the ESRI's commitment to producing research that is independent, objective and of high quality. Independence is assured through the contractual relationships between the Institute and its clients and underpinned by a policy of publishing research, regardless of the findings or source of funding. Quality, objectivity and independence are further supported by a rigorous peer review system, which is examined regularly by the Council, and by peer reviews of the Institute itself.

In recent years, the Institute has focused on building financial sustainability through multi-annual programmes of research funded by a number of government departments and agencies. These programmes are discussed in Section 2. The Council acknowledges the importance of the continued support from government in the form of the annual grant-in-aid which is provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. It recognises the significant contribution of many government departments and agencies that funded research programmes in 2017. The other major sources of research funding for the Institute come from competitive funding processes, both in Ireland and in the EU.

The Council also recognises the contributions of individuals and companies that are subscribing ESRI members. These membership subscriptions support the work of the Institute and contribute to ensuring its independence.

Council Governance

The Council of the ESRI continues to ensure that its standards of corporate governance operate to the highest level. There is a high level of awareness regarding where potential conflicts of interest can arise and a strong commitment to ensuring that Council membership is appropriately balanced. The Council's Nominations sub-committee monitors the membership to ensure that the Council has the requisite skills, broad sectoral coverage and gender balance.

Normally, Council membership is for a three-year period, with a renewal being common for a further three years. Council members are not paid any fees for their membership of the Council. Members are nominated through a formal process and elected at the Institute's AGM.

In 2017, Mr Pdraig McManus continued his term as Chairman. John Buckley and John Martin served on the Audit and Risk sub-Committee; Hannah McGee, Brid O'Brien and Alan Barrett served on the Business and Operations sub-committee; and Emer Gilvarry, Pdraig McManus and Alan Barrett served on the Nominations Committee.

At the beginning of 2017, the Council welcomed 4 new members: Mr Patrick Rabbitte, former Minister and former leader of the Labour Party, Mr Ronan Murphy, former Managing Partner of PwC and current board member of Davy and Liberty Insurance, Professor Rowena Pecchenino,

Department of Economics, Finance & Accounting, Maynooth University and Mr Sean O'Driscoll, President of the Glen Dimplex Group.

Employee Engagement Survey 2017

In 2010 and 2016, peer reviews of the Institute were conducted where the emphasis was placed on external evaluations of our output and processes. In 2017, we continued the process of self-evaluation but this time with an emphasis on collecting the views of staff members on how they feel about their work and the working environment provided by the ESRI. We asked colleagues from the Dublin City University Business School, Dr. Edel Conway and Dr. Yseult Feeney, to conduct the survey on our behalf. Following consultations with staff, the survey was run in November 2017 and almost all staff completed the questionnaire. Results and recommendations were presented to the staff in early 2018.

Research Outputs in 2017

In 2017, the Institute advanced its research strategy through significant output across its 12 research areas. Our research was disseminated in 40 reports, 62 journal articles and 24 book chapters, in addition to a Research Note and four Special Articles published with the *Quarterly Economic Commentaries*. Summaries of journal-published research studies were published in 24 Research Bulletins. Work-in-progress was disseminated in 31 working papers.

The potential impact of Brexit ran through much of the Institute's work in 2017. It was discussed in each of the ESRI's *Quarterly Economic Commentaries* and by researchers at the Oireachtas Committee on European Union Affairs in May, at the Oireachtas Committee on Budgetary Oversight in September and at the All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit also in September. Researchers explained relevant research findings on topics including trade tariffs, the geographical and sectoral impact of Brexit and Ireland's increased attractiveness to foreign direct investment.

In May 2017, the ESRI commenced a three-year joint research programme on the economics of housing with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The programme builds on the ESRI's substantial body of work in this area with the objective of developing an accurate and comprehensive understanding of interconnected factors at play in the housing market. The first output was published in December, providing projections for house prices to the year 2020.

During 2017, the ESRI produced work with significant implications for spatial planning in Ireland that fed into *Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework*, the Government's policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of the country. Published in early 2018, the research carried out in 2017 provided projections for population growth, jobs growth and employment growth across every region in Ireland. The demographic projections were also used in a major piece of research to assess the likely demand for healthcare and social care services in Ireland up to the year 2030.

Growing Up in Ireland

In 2017/2018, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the children in the infant cohort at 9 years of age. The first results from this data sweep will be published in three Key Findings in November 2018, focusing on physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development. As the study's first ever data sweep in 2007/08 focused on 9 year olds in the child cohort, the latest results from the infant cohort will provide an opportunity to directly compare the experiences of both cohorts at the same age. This will shed light on differences in child wellbeing and development between those whose early formative years were in a period of economic boom and those whose early years were in a time of economic recession.

People

The Council would like to commend the Institute's staff whose expertise and commitment enables the Institute to continually identify new solutions to policy challenges. The Council would also like to thank the government departments and state agencies who support critical research programmes, ESRI Members who provide valuable ongoing support, and the many stakeholders who engage with the work of the Institute. Such support enables the Institute to work towards realising its vision of "Informed Policy for a Better Ireland".

Pádraig McManus

Chairman

Alan Barrett

Director

2. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017

Implementation of the Institute's research strategy ensures that the Institute contributes evidence to inform policy debate and decision-making.¹ The Strategy outlines the Institute's priority actions for the period in the context of the Institute's mission, vision, goals and values. These were developed by the Council in agreement with the staff, following a comprehensive strategic process in 2014. Our goals of *research excellence* and *policy impact* are being pursued through three sets of strategic actions related to research programmes, collaborations and dissemination. They are being supported by a further three sets of actions relating to funding, human resources and business processes. These goals and actions help to ensure that the Institute stays focused on its key role as a centre for excellence in policy-focused research in Ireland in the economic and social domains.

The Council oversees the implementation of the research strategy through twice-yearly reports to the Business and Operations sub-committee. The reports cover the research agenda across the 12 research areas, as well as the implementation of the strategic actions.

This section briefly sets out the progress made in 2017 in delivering on the actions designed to meet our goals of research excellence and policy impact. It looks at progress in relation to research activity, followed by research supports – generating funding, developing human resources and improving business processes.

2.1 Research Activity

These strategic actions relate to developing research areas, building collaborations and improving dissemination. In each case, we provide illustrations of developments that took place in 2017 in relation to these strategic actions.

2.1.1 Developing Research Areas

Brexit, Housing and Healthcare were among the many challenges facing Ireland in 2017 and the Institute's research agenda reflected this. Research on Brexit built on earlier work but was also extended into new dimensions such as the impact on consumer prices². Our research on Housing was expanded through a new research programme with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and through the extension of our work with the Residential Tenancies Board. Our work on Health saw the development of a projection model for healthcare need into the future.

2.1.2 Collaborations

Under our joint research programme with the Department of Finance, the practice of co-authoring papers with colleagues in the Department continued. This feature of the research programme has been very valuable in terms of facilitating knowledge transfer in both directions between the Department and the ESRI. The approach has now been extended to our new programme with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. International collaborations were also continued – for example, through the ESRI's hosting of the Irish national contact point of the European Migration Network.

2.1.3 Dissemination

The dissemination of research remains a key task and 2017 saw enhanced efforts in both the traditional and newer methods. We trialled a new approach to our use of Twitter in 2017. Rather than just tweeting on the day a report is released, we went back to earlier research output and tweeted about it over the course of a week. The trial seemed to be successful and helped to overcome a

¹ A copy of the ESRI's *Research Strategy 2014–2018* (2014) can be downloaded at: <https://www.esri.ie/about/esri-research-strategy-2014-2018/>.

² This work was published in 2018.

difficulty that can arise if a report is “lost” due to other events competing for media space on a given day. We also continued to hold launches and briefings, including briefings for political parties.

2.2 Research Supports

These strategic actions relate to generating funding, developing human resources and improving business processes. In each case we provide some illustrations of developments that took place in 2017 in relation to these strategic actions.

2.2.1 Generating Funding

Funding remains a key challenge and so considerable effort was devoted to this issue in 2017.

Increasingly, multi-annual bilateral research programmes with government departments and agencies have become central to our funding model. A number of new programmes came into operation in 2017 – for example, programmes with the Pensions Authority, Inter-trade Ireland, the Department of Social Protection and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. Other programmes were renewed and/or extended – one example was our programme with the Department of Finance which saw Banking added to the earlier topics Taxation and the Macroeconomy.

2.2.2 Human Resources

The Institute has been rebuilding its capacity in recent years following the years of the economic downturn. Staff numbers have grown from just under 90 in 2015 to about 120 at the end of 2017. In relative terms, this represents significant growth and is a positive indicator. However, we were mindful that such an increase requires proactive efforts in terms of staff induction and engagement. Hence, we have developed our induction programme and conducted an employee engagement survey to ensure that staff felt connected to the goals and values of the ESRI.

2.2.3 Business Processes

The processes for tendering for research contracts and the subsequent reporting requirements have become increasingly complex. This situation has been recognised by the universities and they have typically expanded their “research offices” and supports to researchers in the areas of tendering and project management. We had also recognised that we needed to improve our project management capacity partly in response to the growing number of multi-annual research programmes. The Institute expanded its capacity in this area in 2016 through the appointment of a Research Project and Funding Manager. Throughout 2017, projects have been rolled out in this area whereby our project management is continuously improving. We also undertook substantial work in the areas of risk management and business continuity, including the development of risk registers and solutions to possible disruptions arising from events such as IT outages and building inaccessibility.

3. RESEARCH IN 2017

This section provides an overview of our research activities and findings for 2017. Following these highlights, we provide a brief summary of research across the 12 research areas in 2017. Further details on the research and the researchers involved are available on the ESRI website.

3.1 Research Highlights

3.1.1 Macroeconomics

- House prices could rise by 20 per cent between 2017 and 2020 if strong economic growth and the slow rate of housing supply continue.
- Analysis using the ESRI's model of the macroeconomy indicated that a 'hard' Brexit would reduce Irish potential output by more than 3 per cent over the medium term.

3.1.2 Internationalisation and Competitiveness

- Research on Irish exporting firms finds that it is very risky to enter a new market or launch a new product. Firms are most likely to exit within the first year.
- Investment in knowledge-based capital is an important driver of labour productivity. The evidence shows that that a 10 per cent increase in investment leads to a 2 per cent increase in firm productivity.

3.1.3 Energy and Environment

- Research proposed a new mechanism for allocating capacity payment among generators in order to incentivise firms to increase their reliability. Increased reliability would lead to fewer blackouts and reduce electricity prices.
- Under current market conditions, photovoltaic (PV) energy and battery investments are not profitable in Ireland.

3.1.4 Communications and Transport

- Fuel purchased in the Republic of Ireland by residents of Northern Ireland during the years 2013 to 2015 was worth €230 million in tax receipts and generated 1.17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.
- Research examining if broadband increases firm productivity finds mixed evidence. There were positive and significant effects for some industries, including information and communication services and administrative and support services.

3.1.5 Labour Markets and Skills

- Women, non-Irish nationals and young people were more likely to earn minimum wage, according to a study using data from 2014.
- Under-utilisation of employee skills is a problem in Ireland, with 46 per cent of full-time Irish employees reporting that their skills are greater than those required to do their job.

3.1.6 Migration, Integration and Demography

- Research discussed the impact of new legislation that has restricted family reunification of refugees to nuclear family members only. While refugees can still apply for other dependent family members to join them, they now have to show that they can financially support them.
- Over 121,100 non-Irish nationals acquired Irish citizenship between 2005, when records began, and the end of 2015. Data for adults of non-EU origin living in Ireland at the end of 2015 show that 45 per cent had acquired adult citizenship.

3.1.7 Education

- Students with strong maths skills and positive relationships with teachers are more likely to settle in well to second-level education.
- Students with special educational needs have fewer friends in school compared to their peers. They are also more likely to have poor-quality peer relations compared to students without additional needs.

3.1.8 Taxation, Welfare and Pensions

- Income inequality remained stable during the recession as a result of the progressive tax-transfer system. Ireland avoided the rise in income inequality seen in many other countries.
- The SWITCH model was extended to analyse income-tested cards in addition to age-contingent cards for people under 6 and over 70 years old. The model was also developed to provide policy-relevant analyses of the new Affordable Childcare Scheme.

3.1.9 Social Inclusion and Equality

- Lack of flexible working arrangements, high work pressure and a long-hours culture deter women from seeking senior positions in the civil service.
- Almost one in eight people in Ireland report that they have experienced discrimination at work, in recruitment or in accessing public or private services.

3.1.10 Health and Quality of Life

- In 2017, substantial work took place to develop the Hippocrates model to formulate projections of demand for healthcare in Ireland.
- Research using the Hippocrates model found that rapid population increase and ageing will increase demand for health and social care across all sectors, especially for services for older people.

3.1.11 Children and Young People

- Overweight and obesity remain a major health problem, particularly among children from low-income families.
- Boys and children whose mothers have lower levels of education are the most likely to have more than three hours of screen time per day.

3.1.12 Behavioural Economics

- Experimental results showed that consumers struggle to understand Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) plans.
- Experiments confirmed that consumers were more able to identify and choose cheaper energy packages when an estimated annual bill was shown.

3.2 Summaries of Research across the 12 Research Areas

3.2.1 Macroeconomics

The macroeconomic research area in the ESRI covers a wide range of issues that impact on the overall performance of the Irish economy. Research aims to improve understanding of factors affecting priority issues, including domestic growth, stable taxation policy, the property sector and the relationship between the macroeconomy and the financial sector.

Throughout 2017, research focused on developments in the housing market. In May, the ESRI and the **Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government** commenced a three-year joint research programme. Work began to develop estimates of housing demand, supply, affordability and social housing supports. In November, a Special Article assessed the stability or otherwise of recent house price developments. The study provided medium-run forecasts of future price changes. It found that house prices in Ireland could increase by 20 per cent from 2017 to 2020 if projections for strong economic growth over the period are realised and if the slow rate of housing supply continues.

Research has also focused on the rental sector. A new hedonic rent index was produced for the **Residential Tenancies Board** to incorporate more detail on the location of rental properties across the country. This new index provides information on average rents at a county level as well as a local electoral area level.

As part of an ongoing joint research programme with the **Department of Finance** and the **Office of the Revenue Commissioners**, research covered a range of macroeconomic and taxation issues in Ireland. This included an examination of how exchange rate variations and differing prices of motoring fuels between Ireland and Northern Ireland incentivise consumers to purchase motoring fuels across the Border. Work in this research programme also estimated income tax elasticities, showing how these can vary across time, type of taxpayer and income level. Research examining the sensitivity of VAT revenues to economic activity found that income tax revenues are more sensitive to economic fluctuations than revenue arising from the Universal Social Charge. This research programme also examined the role that gifts and inheritances play in household wealth and property acquisition.

Further work was undertaken on the potential impact of Brexit on the Irish economy, focusing on transport connections and the role of the UK as a land-bridge to other trading partners. The scope of the research programme with the **Department of Finance** was expanded during the year to cover topics relating to banking and financial stability. Research will focus on investment patterns and financing requirements of small and medium-sized enterprises, and also on developing stress-testing tools for the mortgage market in order to monitor the financial stability of the Irish economy.

The *Quarterly Economic Commentary* continued to be a core output of the Institute throughout 2017. The ongoing improvement in Ireland's economy was discussed in each issue, along with potential threats such as Brexit. The Institute's model of the macro-economy, COSMO, continued to be used to inform our analysis of economic developments. COSMO was also used by the Department of Finance in its analytical work underpinning Budget 2018.

3.2.2 Internationalisation and Competitiveness

ESRI research in this area focuses primarily on the key factors and policies underlying competitiveness and economic growth in Ireland and other European countries in the context of increased European and international integration.

In 2017, research in this area addressed the following themes:

(i) *Productivity spillovers from multinational activity to indigenous firms in Ireland*: This research was funded as part of a joint research programme with the **Department of Finance** and the **Office of the**

Revenue Commissioners. Research results indicated that the absorptive capacity of indigenous firms is key in order to ensure they can benefit from advanced knowledge and technologies associated with multinational firms. This research provided background empirical analysis for the *OECD Ireland Economic Survey 2018*.

(ii) *Studies on competitiveness:* This research was funded by the **European Commission**. One study examined the extent and intensity of production linkages between firms across EU countries and their underlying factors. The results suggested that strengthening the quality of legal systems, lowering barriers to foreign direct investment (FDI), and increasing the flexibility of labour markets could enable and intensify the sourcing of inputs via FDI across EU countries. A second study analysed and compared the performance of indigenous and multinational firms operating in Ireland with respect to productivity, investment in R&D and innovation, trade, and access to finance. The evidence provided by this study was used to put forward policy guidelines for Ireland in the context of the European Semester.

(iii) *Investment in knowledge-based capital and productivity:* As part of a joint research programme with the **Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation** and **Enterprise Ireland**, research examined investment in intangible assets and its impact on productivity. The key results for Ireland indicated that investment in knowledge-based capital was positively associated with productivity across firms. This suggests that it could be beneficial to develop policy measures designed to incentivise investment in a broader range of intangible assets beyond R&D.

(iv) *Impact of Brexit:* In collaboration with the **Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation** and **Enterprise Ireland** research examined the potential impact of the UK exit from the EU on aspects of the Irish economy, focusing on the contribution of imported intermediate inputs from the UK to Irish exports. Other analysis examined services trade flows between Ireland and the UK and the degree to which this sector could be affected by Brexit.

(v) *Cross-border trade:* Research funded by **InterTradeIreland** analysed current trading patterns between Ireland and Northern Ireland at a detailed product level. This study was motivated by a need to understand how possible post-Brexit trade arrangements could impact on overall trade flows. The key result demonstrated the particular exposure of the agri-food sector to increases in trade costs.

3.2.3 Energy and Environment

Research in this area is financed by multi-annual research programmes and research projects with a specific purpose. Energy and climate research is funded by the **Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, ESB, Eirvia, Eirgrid, SSE Ireland, Viridian, Commission for Energy Regulation, Science Foundation Ireland, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland** and the **Gas Innovation Group**. Environmental research is funded by the **Environmental Protection Agency, Health Service Executive** and **Inland Fisheries Ireland**. Collaborations are ongoing with UCD, TCD, UL, UCC, NUIG, QUB, and several universities abroad. The research area co-hosted conferences on the topic of energy policy with UCC in May and UCD in September.

The energy research programme is structured into four areas. Several projects were carried out in each area in addition to the following examples.

- *Market design and regulation:* A paper proposed a new mechanism for allocating capacity payment among generators, incentivising firms to increase their reliability. Consumers would benefit from a reduced probability of blackouts/brownouts and lower electricity prices.
- *Energy services:* Research examining residential energy retrofits found that the best value for money occurs in retrofits of less energy-efficient and larger homes where retrofit types include cavity wall insulation paired with either a boiler with heating controls or heating controls only.

- *Energy infrastructure*: Research exploring different types of feed-in tariffs for renewable electricity found that designs that divide the risk of uncertain wholesale electricity prices between consumers and investors are preferred rather than flat-rate or premium feed-in tariff designs. This was especially the case when consumers and investors were risk-averse.
- *Interface with society and environment*: A paper found that, under current market conditions and regulation, PV and battery investments are not profitable in Ireland. However, this may change soon, which would lead to increasing levels of self-sufficiency.

As part of the environment research programme, carried out in partnership with the **Environmental Protection Agency** and the **Health Service Executive**, a study was completed on the environmental effects of selected fiscal instruments. A paper was published showing that households in high radon risk areas have higher rates of lung cancer, after taking other factors into account. New research began, which conducts a valuation of urban green spaces and coastal amenities using house price data. Other ongoing research includes a choice experiment exploring the aspects of green spaces that people value and that encourage healthy behaviours.

Other environmental research demonstrated the impact of water quality on water-based recreational activity, examining how it impacts both the choice of recreational site and duration of visit.

Within the fisheries research programme, papers identified facilities that are important for attracting visiting anglers, in addition to the economic benefits associated with angling competitions and several destination fishery sites. Ongoing research includes an examination of the relationship between effort and catch among sea bass anglers, as well as their views on stock conservation for this important recreational species.

3.2.4 Communications and Transport

The **Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment** and the **Commission for Communications Regulation** fund the programme of research in communications.

In 2017, a draft paper was completed on the factors affecting consumer switching in Irish telecoms markets. This paper is still under peer review, but the results suggest that long-standing subscribers who have never switched are exceptionally resistant to switching in future. Receiving an unexpectedly high bill is strongly associated with intention to switch, especially among those more inclined to switch. A similar effect arises for expected gains from switching, especially gains over 20 per cent. These results are consistent with both a preference for fair treatment and behavioural barriers to switching that require large gains to overcome. The effects of service bundling and of the few socioeconomic, supplier or application use characteristics that are statistically significant are smaller and not consistent across markets. This implies that willingness to switch is not simply a characteristic of certain social groups, but is more complex and context dependent.

A draft paper explored how the rollout of basic broadband (in the form of “digital subscriber line” or DSL services) affected the productivity of firms. While broadband is widely believed to boost productivity, firm-level evidence is mixed. Work concentrated on the services and distribution sector in Ireland from 2006 to 2012, linking CSO data on firms’ total factor productivity to spatial information on the rollout of DSL. While significant effects were not found for services as a whole, there were positive and significant effects for information and communication services and administrative and support services. A related study started this year on how broadband availability has affected employment among domestic- and foreign-owned firms in Ireland, using data provided by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

Research began into how use of the internet and mobile applications has affected children in Ireland. This study extends work previously done on use of the internet at home and in class by 9-year-old children. It looks at the same children at age 13, when they had moved to secondary school

and many more had access to mobile devices. This work will consider how greater use of digital technologies and applications has affected children's academic, social and personal development.

In collaboration with the Macroeconomics research area, a paper was published on cross-border fuel sales, which showed that petrol stations sell more fuel the closer they are to the border. The research found that fuel sold in the Republic of Ireland to residents of Northern Ireland during the years 2013 to 2015 was worth €230 million in tax receipts and generated 1.17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

3.2.5 Labour Markets and Skills

During 2017 research was undertaken on a range of issues. Two reports were undertaken on the National Minimum Wage for the Low Pay Commission, while two previously completed reports were published. Three studies on educational mismatch in low-income and middle-income countries were completed for the International Labour Organization (ILO) and will be published as chapters in a forthcoming ILO book. The team completed a report on the distribution and determinants of a number of potential barriers to social inclusion for Pobal as part of a research programme on community development. Work also commenced on a new programme of research, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and managed by POBAL, designed to evaluate Pobal's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme.

A new comparative study on contingent employment, commissioned by the Workplace Relations Commission, was largely completed during the period while an evaluation of the Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) programme, carried out on behalf of SOLAS, was finalised and subsequently published in early 2018.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection funded two studies. The first was a major study examining the impact of the activation system Intreo, which was largely completed in 2017. The second was a study on retirement behaviour.

During the year, the team undertook a scoping study for the development of a statistical profiling model for the Philippines labour market on behalf of the Asian Development Bank. Researchers also continued to provide regular reports on Ireland's labour market progress to the European Commission's Employment Policy Observatory.

In collaboration with researchers from the Education area, researchers completed a study evaluating outcomes from the PLC programme, as mentioned above. PLC courses represent the largest component of full-time further education and training provision in Ireland, with over 32,000 learners enrolled in such courses in 2015/16. The evaluation found that the programme was generally highly effective in delivering its core goals of enhancing both employment prospects and transition rates to higher education. However, the study also reported that the types of PLC courses offered have not changed markedly over time even though there has been a dramatic shift in the kinds of jobs available in the Irish labour market. Decisions around which course to offer tend to be driven by student demand rather than skill needs in the economy. The analysis identified a need to develop systems to ensure that PLC courses focused on the labour market are aligned with employer requirements and responsive to changing labour market needs.

The research produced for the ILO consisted of a comprehensive analysis of the current position of the literature on skills mismatch, highlighting areas that are relatively underdeveloped and may warrant further research. A second study involved a major comparative analysis of over-education in low-income and middle-income countries, while a third synthesised the findings of a number of studies on educational mismatch commissioned by the ILO.

3.2.6 Migration, Integration and Demography

Research in the area of Migration, Integration and Demography is conducted under a number of strands. The first strand relates to the ESRI's role as Ireland's National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN) and the related funding provided by the **European Commission** and the **Department of Justice and Equality**.

The EMN Ireland team produced four studies on migration and international protection in Ireland. A study on family reunification of non-EU nationals highlighted its significance as a safe legal route of migration, and its role in supporting the integration of migrants already resident in Ireland. The team worked closely with the **Department of Justice and Equality, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** and other parties to produce the report. Family reunification was also the subject of the annual EMN conference in November.

Working in consultation with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, the Workplace Relations Commission and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, EMN Ireland compiled a study on the illegal employment of non-EU nationals in Ireland. The report showed that the majority of undocumented migrants enter the state legally, often as students or tourists. The study also highlighted that despite increased regulation of the student immigration regime, international students in Ireland may be working outside of their permitted hours.

Two studies on return processes (deportation and voluntary return) were produced in 2017. This research identified that key challenges related to identifying and documenting returnees and effective cooperation with countries in readmitting their own nationals. Finally, a study on establishing the identity of non-EU nationals provided the first comprehensive mapping of the processes involved when a migrant presents at the Irish border, as well as in the context of applications for visas, residence permits, international protection and deportation.

The second strand of research in the area is on immigrant integration. Research funded by the **Department of Justice and Equality** considered immigrant integration in four key life domains: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. It highlighted the very significant proportion of non-EU nationals who have acquired Irish citizenship: 121,000 since records began in 2005. In December, a new two-year programme of research in the area of integration and equality was agreed with the **Department of Justice and Equality**. Research is ongoing, which uses 2016 Census data to examine migrant integration and residential segregation of migrants in Ireland.

In other work on integration, researchers looked at factors predicting satisfaction among international students in higher education in Ireland. The findings show that students' satisfaction with study while abroad is shaped by a number of factors including their satisfaction with their education institution and also by their subjective rating of their health. Research based on the **Norface**-funded Socio-cultural Integration Processes project found that new Polish migrants were more likely to experience discrimination in the Netherlands than in Ireland, and their experience also became more negative over time.

3.2.7 Education

The ESRI education research programme covers all levels of the Irish education system, including early childhood, primary, second-level, further and higher education. Research in 2017 focused on the transition to second-level education, religious and moral education, children with special educational needs, the role and impact of digital technologies in the lives of children, and the Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) programme.

The ESRI prepared a report as part of a consultation process undertaken by the **National Council for Curriculum and Assessment** in relation to a primary school curriculum called Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics. The research analysed data generated by an online survey targeted at educators, parents and members of the general public. The study found strong support for aspects of the curriculum relating to promoting diversity, tolerance, social justice and

understanding of the impact of discrimination. However, there was a lack of consensus on how the proposed curriculum fits with the ethos of denominational schools.

The *Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)* study has provided an invaluable resource for educational research. New analyses for the **Department of Children and Youth Affairs** looked at the way in which primary school experiences can provide a crucial foundation for a successful transition to second-level education. The study findings indicated the importance of providing an engaging primary school experience for all as a basis for later engagement. Early experience of maths emerged as particularly important, pointing to the potential value in rethinking approaches to maths teaching at primary level to enhance interest and skills.

Other research based on *GUI* data found that children with special educational needs had fewer friends in school and poorer-quality peer relations compared to their peers. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those with multiple disabilities were more likely to have poor-quality peer relations. The findings suggest the need for specific programmes to encourage positive peer interactions for this group of students.

In collaboration with researchers in the Communications and Transport area, research investigated the impact of digital technologies within and outside school on academic skills development among children and young people.

Working with researchers in the Labour Market and Skills area, work continued on the evaluation of PLC programme provision. Funded by **SOLAS**, the research includes analyses of the nature and distribution of PLC courses, participants' experiences of the programme and their educational and labour market outcomes.

Education researchers continued to be involved in international networks, including *Understanding Inequalities*, funded by the UK-based **Economic and Social Research Council**, the Network of Experts on the Social Dimension of Education and Training (NESET 2) and the **Directorate General for Education and Culture's** Network of Independent Experts in Education and Training. The Education team also contributed three articles to the annual *Yearbook of Education*.

3.2.8 Taxation, Welfare and Pensions

In 2017, research on Taxation, Welfare and Pensions continued to span a broad range of topics. New perspectives were developed on the evolution of Ireland's income distribution and on the role of tax and welfare policy in shaping that distribution. Research explored the role of in-work benefits in shaping financial support and financial incentives for working families. Research based on the SWITCH model also contributed to the analysis of policy options for medical cards and GP visit cards. The model was extended to analyse not only income-tested cards but also the newer age-contingent cards for people under 6 and over 70 years old. The model was also further developed to provide policy-relevant analyses of the new Affordable Childcare Scheme.

The SWITCH (Simulating Welfare and Income Tax Changes) research programme was supported by funding by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Department of Health, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Finance, and the grant-in-aid provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Most analyses of income distribution are based on "snapshots" – cross-sectional data for different years. ESRI research goes beyond that, using the longitudinal element of EU-SILC data to identify patterns of income movement from year to year. In June, key research findings were summarised in papers for the Budget Perspectives conference. The research found that income inequality rose somewhat between 2008 and 2013, but fell back to its earlier levels by 2015. Sharp falls in the income of the bottom decile during the recession arose mainly from falls in income for those who were initially at higher income levels – not from falls in the income of those already at the bottom of the distribution. The research also found that the "automatic stabilisation" impact of Ireland's tax-

transfer system, inherent in its progressive structure at the outset of the recession, played a strong role in limiting the increase in inequality during the recession. Further work on this topic commenced, broadening the analysis to other EU crisis countries.

The SWITCH model was also used, with support from the SWITCH team, for policy analyses within the Departments of Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and Social Protection, including a Social Impact Assessment of Budget 2017. A collaborative project with the Department of Finance also expanded the capacity of both organisations to analyse the impacts of indirect tax changes, and further developments in this area are planned for 2018. Regular analysis of the distributive impact of budgetary policy continued, with the model database restructured to use almost 8,000 households from the CSO's nationally representative Survey on Income and Living Conditions for 2013 and 2014.

A new programme of research with the Pensions Authority commenced, examining issues associated with pensions and retirement in the older population in Ireland.

3.2.9 Social Inclusion and Equality

Research on social inclusion and equality investigates factors influencing access to the material and other resources required to participate in economic and social life, in addition to the processes that lead to inequalities in opportunities and outcomes.

In 2017 two reports were published as part of the research programme on equality and integration funded by the **Department of Justice and Equality**. In January David Stanton, TD, Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, launched *A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland*. The study highlighted extreme disadvantage among Irish Travellers in terms of education, employment, housing and health. A study of gender balance in the civil service, published in December, found that men were twice as likely as similarly qualified women to occupy senior positions. The research identified lack of flexible working arrangements, lack of structured handovers, gender differences in task assignments and a long-hours culture among the barriers to promotion for women.

A two-year programme of research began with the **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission**. The first study, published in November, found the highest levels of perceived discrimination among those with disabilities, those of black ethnicity and Travellers. Women were almost twice as likely as men to report discrimination at work. A second study is under review and explores changing attitudes to immigrants and to specific groups including Muslims and Roma. A third study commenced on inequality in housing conditions and discrimination in access to housing.

Ongoing research for the **National Disability Authority** examined the impact of disability on employment-related transitions as Ireland moved from recession to recovery.

Research funded by the **Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection** published in December found a considerable amount of movement into and out of poverty: of those deprived in either of two years, about half were deprived in both years with the other half evenly divided between those entering and exiting deprivation. Vulnerable groups including lone parents and those with a disability were more likely to be poor and their poverty was more likely to be persistent.

Ongoing research worked to provide an overview of social housing provision in the context of the broader housing market, in addition to reviewing the evolution of housing quality since 2004. As part of a research programme funded by the **Low Pay Commission**, an updated analysis was completed on the minimum wage, using data from the Quarterly National Household Survey and EU-SILC 2015.

Under a research programme on community development and social inclusion, funded by **Pobal**, a study investigating mothers' employment and the cost of childcare in Ireland (drawing on the first three waves of the *Growing Up in Ireland* infant cohort) is due to be published early in 2018.

ESRI researchers contributed to the **International Panel on Social Progress**, submitting a chapter on the future of work to *Rethinking Society for the 21st Century*, which will be published online by Cambridge University Press in May 2018.

3.2.10 Health and Quality of Life

In 2017, health research focused on the themes of the development of a projection model for healthcare demand and expenditure; the impact of changes in acute bed capacity on hospital length of stay; costing post-stroke cognitive impairment; inequities in access to GP care; the relationship between the environment and health; and pensions, retirement and financial security among the older population.

Quality of life research in 2017 focused on occupational injury and illness within sectors including construction, agriculture, the health sector and industry; risk taking and work accidents on Irish farms; the effects of unemployment on quality of life among young people; and participation in sports/physical activity.

Under a research programme funded by the **Department of Health**, the ESRI developed the demand phase of the Hippocrates projection model for healthcare demand and expenditure. A report published in October contained projections of demand from 2015 to 2030, based on new ESRI projections for population growth. The report contained the most comprehensive mapping of public and private activity in the Irish healthcare system ever published. The research found that the population of Ireland is projected to grow by between 14 to 23 per cent. The share of population aged 65 and over is projected to increase from one in eight to one in five. The demand for health and social care is projected to increase across all sectors, with the greatest increases for services for older people.

Three research projects funded by the **Health Research Board** continued in 2017, on costing post-stroke cognitive impairment; inequalities in access to GP services; and determinants of hospital utilisation including the supply of non-acute services.

The ESRI expanded its research focus on ageing in 2017. A project on financial security in the older population continued, which the Health Service Executive funds.

In 2017, the research programme on environmental economics, funded by the **Environmental Protection Agency**, examined the association between radon and lung cancer, and between green space and obesity, using geo-coded data on environmental features matched to health outcomes data from TILDA.

In May, a study of risk-taking in Irish farms was published as part of the research programme with the **Health and Safety Authority**. It reported that farming was the most dangerous occupation in Ireland in terms of fatalities. The study found that the most common risks taken by farmers were not getting help with difficult jobs and not using safety equipment. The report also highlighted the significance of checking machinery in reducing the risks of farm accidents.

Commissioned by the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic Players Association, a study began examining the commitments of senior inter-county players. Research is investigating the impact that playing at this level is having on players' lives, both positive and negative, and also on their club involvement. Results will be published in 2018.

3.2.11 Children and Young People

Work in this area principally examines the developmental outcomes for children and young people and how these vary between different groups in society. A substantial proportion of the research in this field is closely tied to the *Growing Up in Ireland*³ project, the national longitudinal study of children.

Substantial progress was made throughout the year in progressing *Growing Up in Ireland*. Interviewing was completed with over 8,000 9-year-olds and their families in the project's younger

³ *Growing Up in Ireland* is largely funded by the Irish government, with a generous contribution from The Atlantic Philanthropies.

infant cohort while a pilot study was completed with the 20-year-olds in the older child cohort. Approximately 7,000 20-year-olds will be interviewed in their homes in 2018.

In October Katherine Zappone, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, launched research on the transition process from primary to secondary school, based on data from the child cohort at 13 years of age. Findings from the study indicated the importance of providing an engaging primary school experience for children as the basis for subsequent positive engagement at second level.

The *Growing Up in Ireland* 2017 Annual Research Conference was held in November. The keynote address was given by Professor Yvonne Kelly, Professor of Lifecourse Epidemiology at University College London and Associate Director of the International Centre for Lifecourse Studies in Society and Health. Her keynote address was titled *An equal start: the importance of evidence from longitudinal studies to support children's healthy development*.

Three *Key Findings* reports from the 7/8-year-old wave of the infant cohort were launched at the conference. These focused on health and development, school and learning, and socio-emotional development and play. These recent findings indicate that most 7/8-year-olds are in good health. However, overweight and obesity remain a major health problem, particularly among children from lower income families. Dietary quality was linked to family social class. Most children adjust well to primary school, but children who find it difficult to initially settle into school continue to experience difficulties with school over the following years. Most 7/8-year-olds are also doing well in terms of their socio-emotional development, with girls having higher scores on measures of social skills (assertion, empathy, responsibility and self-control) than boys.

A report on healthcare utilisation among young children was also launched at the conference. The report found that at both 9 months and 3 years of age, children with a full medical card or GP visit card had a significantly higher number of GP visits per annum than children who had no medical cover, i.e. no medical card, GP visit card or private health insurance. This was the case after adjusting for the child's health needs, other child characteristics and family characteristics.

3.2.12 Behavioural Economics

The ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit (BRU) uses controlled laboratory and field experiments to investigate economic decisions across multiple policy areas. In 2017, the BRU won the competition to supply behavioural insights services to the **OECD**. This three-year programme involves designing and conducting behavioural experiments to support the OECD's efforts to improve the use of evidence in regulatory policy.

The BRU also obtained a new contract to work with the **Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government** and **Irish Water**, to develop behaviourally informed interventions to assist households in replacing lead pipework.

More findings were generated by PRICE Lab, funded by the **Competition and Consumer Protection Commission**, the **Commission for Communications Regulation** and the **Commission for Energy Regulation**. Experimental results obtained in autumn 2017 showed that consumers struggle to understand Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) plans. A method was also developed to test how accurately consumers can trade off search and switching costs against potential gains.

Experimental findings were produced in relation to two issues under a research programme on the economics of pensions, funded by the **Pensions Authority**. First, results showed that people systematically underestimate money growth, especially on regular savings. Second, experiments revealed that when deciding whether to receive a pension as a lump sum or a guaranteed regular monthly income (an annuity), individuals display a large bias that depends on how the choice is framed. Further experiments will test ways to assist people to overcome these two problems.

A behavioural strand of a research programme on healthcare reform, funded by the **Department of Health**, is now well underway. Eye-tracking equipment will be used to assist in a pre-test of the

format for the introduction of calorie posting in restaurants. The health programme also involves collaboration on a series of randomised controlled trials designed to improve the management of hospital waiting lists.

Results were obtained for the **Environmental Protection Agency** from an experiment showing that willingness to pay for hybrid and electric cars is altered by altering respective tax rates. A pilot experiment was also undertaken for a study of whether the habits of transition year students are affected by participation in the Green Schools scheme at primary level.

Work undertaken for the **Central Bank of Ireland** reviewed a large volume of evidence from behavioural economics in relation to the design of financial products. This study, to be completed in early 2018, will draw conclusions about whether certain financial product features have harmful effects on consumers' decision-making.

Under the programme funded by the **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine**, a farm-level model of the risk of violating the Nitrates regulations was developed using administrative data.

Lastly, three two-day training courses were delivered for the **European Commission**, introducing the methods of behavioural economics and training officials in their application to policy problems.

4. NATIONAL STUDY OF CHILDREN (*GROWING UP IN IRELAND*)

Growing Up in Ireland is the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland. It is funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, with a contribution from The Atlantic Philanthropies. The research is conducted by a consortium of independent researchers at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin.

The study follows almost 20,000 children throughout Ireland as they grow up. The objective of the study is to provide evidence to inform the development of effective policies and services for children, young people and families. To do this, the study monitors the physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development of children and identifies factors that help or hinder their wellbeing. Data collection focuses on four areas: health and physical development; socio-emotional development; cognitive and educational development; and (from 17 years of age) economic and civic participation.

Information is collected from children, their caregivers, principals and teachers by face-to-face interviews and postal questionnaires. *Growing Up in Ireland* emphasises direct participation in the study by children themselves from as early an age as possible, to ensure that it captures the voice of the child – in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. From the age of three, children complete cognitive tests. As they grow older, they record their views in detail, using age-appropriate methods and questionnaires.

There are two cohorts in the study. In 2007/08, 8,500 9-year-olds were recruited and interviewed. These form the child cohort. Subsequent data sweeps for this cohort took place in 2011/12 and 2015/16, when the children were 13 and 17/18 years of age. The next data sweep will take place from June to December 2018, when the young people are 20 years old.

In 2008/09, 11,100 children were recruited and interviewed at 9 months of age. These form the infant cohort. Subsequent face-to-face interviews took place in 2010/11 and 2013 when the children were 3 years and 5 years old. A postal survey was also carried out with their main caregiver in 2015/16, when the children were 7/8 years of age.

In 2017/2018, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the children in the infant cohort at 9 years of age. The first results from this data sweep will be published in three *Key Findings* in November 2018, focusing on physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development. As the study's first ever data sweep in 2007/08 focused on 9 year olds in the child cohort, the latest results from the infant cohort will provide an opportunity to directly compare the experiences of both cohorts at the same age. This will shed light on differences in child wellbeing and development between those whose early formative years were in a period of economic boom and those whose early years were in a time of economic recession.

5. RESEARCH AREA COORDINATORS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

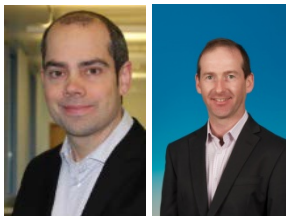
- **Macroeconomics** (Professor Kieran McQuinn and Dr Martina Lawless)



- **Internationalisation and Competitiveness** (Professor Iulia Siedschlag)



- **Energy and Environment** (Dr Valentin Bertsch, Professor John Curtis and Professor Seán Lyons)



- **Communications and Transport** (Professor Seán Lyons and Professor Edgar Morgenroth)



- **Labour Markets and Skills** (Professor Seamus McGuinness)



- **Migration, Integration and Demography** (Dr Frances McGinnity and Dr Emma Quinn)



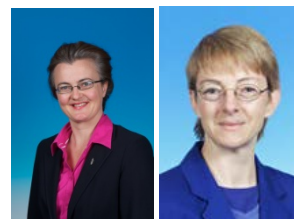
- **Education** (Professor Emer Smyth and Professor Selina McCoy)



- **Taxation, Welfare and Pensions** (Professor Tim Callan)



- **Social Inclusion and Equality** (Dr Frances McGinnity and Professor Dorothy Watson)



- **Health and Quality of Life** (Dr Anne Nolan, Dr Maev-Ann Wren and Professor Helen Russell)



- **Children and Young People** (Professor James Williams)



- **Behavioural Economics** (Dr Pete Lunn)



6. STAFF AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

Director

Alan Barrett

Economic Analysis

Achim Ahrens

Samantha Arnold

Adele Bergin

Valentin Bertsch

Elaine Byrne

Philip Carthy

John Curtis

Kelly De Bruin

Judith Delaney

Seraphim Dempsey

Mel Devine

Mattia Di Ubaldo

Valeria di Cosmo

Philip Economides

Desta Zahlay Fitiwi

Abian Garcia Rodriguez

Sarah Groarke

Gianluca Grilli

Jason Harold

Marie Hyland

Elish Kelly

Dana Kirchem

Ilias Kostarakos

Martina Lawless

Muireann Lynch

Seán Lyons

Maria Martinez-Cillero

Seamus McGuinness

Kieran McQuinn (Head of Division)

Teresa Monteiro

Edgar Morgenroth

Martin Murphy

Conor O'Toole

Emma Quinn

Paul Redmond

Marianna Russo

Anne Sheridan

Iulia Siedschlag

Rachel Slaymaker

Petr Spodniak

Manuel Tong Koecklin

Petros Varthalitis

Adele Whelan

Aykut Mert Yakut

Growing Up in Ireland

Claire Brilly

Laura Cashman

James Connaughton

Eva Gannert

Caroline Goodwin

Eoin Keogh

Eoin McNamara

Mary Kirwan

Andrew Moore

Aisling Murray

Aoife Murphy

Daráine Murphy

Niamh O'Connor

Orla O'Leary

Desmond O'Mahony

Sarah Purcell

Elizabeth Burke

Amanda Quail

Fionnuala Waters

James Williams (Head of Division)

Corporate Resources

Eleanor Bannerton (Operations and Strategy Manager)

Claire Buckley (HR Manager)

Sarah Burns

Bernice Clancy

Liz Coyle

Llana D'Emidio

Maria Fitzgerald

Louise Gallagher

Elaine Goode

Dave Gorman

Adrienne Jinks

Rachel Joyce

Mark Magee

Ingrida Maguire

Emma McEvatt

Francis McEvoy

Colm O'Dwyer

Clare O'Neill

Charles O'Regan (Head of Finance)

Cathal O'Shea

Fearghal Smyth

Jackie Turner

Social Research

Joanne Banks

Cameron Belton

Maxime Bercholz

Aoife Brick

Tim Callan

Sheelah Connolly

Merike Darmody

Nora-Ann Donnelly

Karina Doorley

James Eighan

Éamonn Fahey

Raffaele Grotti

Conor Keegan

Claire Keane

Pete Lunn

Bertrand Maître

Selina McCoy

Terry McElvaney

Frances McGinnity

Féidhlim McGowan

Gretta Mohan

Aine Ni Choisdealbha

Sanna Nivakoski

Anne Nolan

Jessica O'Sullivan

Mark Regan

Deirdre Robertson

Helen Russell

Bernadette Ryan

Samantha Smith

Emer Smyth (Head of Division)

Shane Timmons

Brendan Walsh

John R. Walsh

Dorothy Watson

Richard Whyte

Maev-Ann Wren

7. ESRI COUNCIL – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Padraig McManus, President and Chair

Padraig McManus became Chair of the Economic and Social Research Institute in January 2016. In 2017, he also chaired the Governance and Nominations sub-committee. Mr McManus has been a member of the ESRI Council since July 2012. Previously, he was Chief Executive and member of the Board of the ESB from July 2002 until 2012. He joined the ESB in 1973 and spent 15 years in the company's international businesses, later becoming Managing Director of ESB International and Commercial Director of ESB. He is a Global Counsellor of the Conference Board of the United States. He is Chairman of the Curragh Racecourse Company.

Alan Barrett, Director

Alan Barrett first joined the ESRI in 1994 and became Director of the Institute in July 2015, at which point he joined the Council. During his time with the Institute he was seconded to the Department of Finance (2001–2003) and to The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) at Trinity College Dublin (2011–2013). He was a member of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council from 2011 to 2015. He is a Research Fellow with IZA (Institute for the Study of Labor) in Bonn, Germany and is Co-editor of the IZA Journal of European Labor Studies. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland. He is also a member of the Climate Change Advisory Council.

John Buckley, former Comptroller and Auditor General

John Buckley joined the Council in February 2013 and chaired the Audit and Risk sub-committee in 2016. He is an accountant (ACCA) and a barrister. He has a degree in psychology and an MSc in strategic management. He previously served as Comptroller and Auditor General.

Pádraig Dalton, Director General, Central Statistics Office

Pádraig Dalton joined the Council in July 2012. He is a career statistician who joined the Central Statistics Office in November 1991, taking up the position of Director General in May 2012. He is a member of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC), which provides professional guidance to the European Statistical System (ESS) for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. He is also Chair of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) High Level Group on the Modernisation of Official Statistics and is an ex-officio member of the National Statistics Board (NSB).

Emer Gilvarry, Partner, Mason Hayes & Curran

Emer Gilvarry joined the Council in February 2014. She is the chairperson of Mason Hayes & Curran and a partner in the dispute resolution team. Emer is experienced in a broad range of commercial and financial services litigation. Emer specialises in project management and investigatory work and acts as a legal advisor to corporates and boards on corporate safeguards and compliance procedures. Emer is a member of the advisory board at UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School and a member of the Ireland Funds Board. In 2014, Emer was ranked in the Financial Services 50 and the Global 100 by *Business & Finance*. Emer is also a qualified mediator.

John Martin, former Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

John Martin joined the Council in February 2015. He was Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at the OECD from 2000 to early 2013. From late 2013 to early 2016, he worked as a consultant for the German Bertelsmann Foundation on a major cross-country project on the political economy of reforming European labour markets. From 2005 to 2017, he was a member of the French Prime Minister's Employment Policy Council. He is a member of the National Statistics Board of Ireland. His other professional roles include the following: Policy Associate of the Leverhulme Centre for Research

on Globalisation and Economic Policy at the University of Nottingham; Research Fellow of the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA) in Bonn; member of the Strategic Advisory Board for the Kiel Institute Centre for Globalisation; member of the strategic board of the Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire d'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques (LIEPP) at Sciences Po, Paris; and member of the Irish government's Labour Market Council. In 2013, he was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

Hannah McGee, Professor of Psychology and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Hannah McGee joined the Council in November 2010. She chaired the Governance and Nominations sub-committee in 2014–2015 and chaired the Business and Operations sub-committee 2016 - 2017. She is a health psychologist whose research interests are in quality of life assessment and epidemiological and psychosocial aspects of ageing, cardiovascular disease and sexual health. She was awarded a DSc (NUI) for her research portfolio in 2015. Her current brief is as chief academic officer for RCSI's degree awarding programmes – incorporating Dublin, Bahrain, Dubai and Malaysia. She has served as president of the Psychological Society of Ireland and the European Health Psychology Society and as Chair of the Rehabilitation Committee of the European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation. She chaired the Department of Health's expert group to develop Changing Cardiovascular Health: National Policy on Cardiovascular Health (2010–2019). Currently she serves on the oversight board of The Irish Longitudinal Ageing Study (TILDA) and on the council of the National Children's Research Centre.

David Moloney, Assistant Secretary, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

David Moloney joined the Council in November 2010. He is Assistant Secretary at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and Head of its labour market and enterprise division. His responsibilities include the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES).

Rónán Murphy*, former Managing Partner, PwC and current board member, Davy and Liberty Insurance

Rónán Murphy joined the Council in February 2017. He is a non-executive director of Davy and Liberty Insurance. Rónán was previously Senior Partner of PwC Ireland, a position he was elected to in 2007 and was re-elected to for a further four year term on 1 July 2011. Rónán joined PwC in 1980 and was admitted to the partnership in 1992, following a two year secondment to PwC in Boston. As an assurance Partner, he served PwC clients in the financial services, technology and services sectors. In 1995, Rónán joined the Firm's Leadership Team and held a number of operational leadership roles, prior to being appointed as Partner in Charge of the Firm's Assurance practice in 2003, a position he held for four years. Rónán was a member of the PwC EMEA Leadership Board from 2010 to 2015. Rónán completed a Bachelor of Commerce and Masters in Business Studies at University College Dublin before qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1982. Rónán is a founding member of the British Irish Chamber of Commerce.

Bríd O'Brien, Head of Policy and Media, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

Bríd O'Brien joined the Council in May 2012. She is Head of Policy and Media with the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed. Bríd is one of the Community and Voluntary Pillar representatives on the National Economic and Social Council, and she has been a member of the Labour Market Council since it was established in September 2013. Bríd works with colleagues in the community and voluntary sector and other civil society organisations on issues of social inclusion, economic justice and equality.

* Joined the Council in February 2017.

Sean O'Driscoll*, President of the Glen Dimplex Group

Sean O'Driscoll joined the Council in February 2017. He is a Bachelor of Commerce Graduate from University College Cork (UCC) and a Chartered Accountant. On graduating from UCC in 1979, he joined KPMG and was elected a Partner in 1989. He joined Glen Dimplex as Group Financial Director in 1990, was appointed Deputy Chief Executive in 1994, Group Chief Executive Officer in 1998 and President in 2016. He is a member of the National Competitiveness Council of Ireland, the Energy Efficiency Advisory Board of the International Energy Agency, the Trilateral Commission and is an Industry Partner to the Irish Government's Action Plan for Jobs. He is a former Non-Executive Director of Allied Irish Banks. He is the recipient of an OBE and a Légion d'Honneur award.

Rowena Pecchenino*, Professor of Economics, Maynooth University

Rowena Pecchenino joined the Council in February 2017. She is Professor of Economics at Maynooth University. After earning her PhD from the University of Wisconsin she joined the Department of Economics at Michigan State University, where she went on to be Professor and Department Chair. At Maynooth University she has served as Head of the Department of Economics, Finance & Accounting and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. She has been a member of the Irish Research Council, the Department of Health and Children Expert Group on Resource Allocation and Financing in the Health Sector, and is currently the President of the Irish Economic Association. She has published and continues to conduct research in a number of distinct fields in economics, from the defence to religion. She has published widely in journals such as the *American Economic Review*, the *Economic Journal*, and the *Journal of Public Economics*.

Patrick Rabbitte*, former Minister and former leader of the Labour Party

Patrick Rabbitte joined the Council in February 2017. He is a former Irish Labour Party politician who served as Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources from 2011 to 2014. He was Leader of the Labour Party from 2002 to 2007 and Minister of State for Commerce, Science and Technology from 1994 to 1997.

Sally Shortall, Professor, Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy, Newcastle University

Sally Shortall joined the Council in May 2015. She is the Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy, Newcastle University. She has served as an expert advisor to the UK Food Standard Agency, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the OECD. She was recently Principal Investigator on a report on women in agriculture in Scotland for the Scottish Government, who have set up a Task Force to consider implementation of the recommendations of this report. She is the President of the Executive Committee of the European Society for Rural Sociology. Her research interests include rural women, rural development theory and practice, community and stakeholder engagement in policy practice and how evidence is used to inform policy.

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