ACESA
ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF STATE AGENCIES

Minutes of the Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Association of Chief Executives of State Agencies

The Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Association of Chief Executives of State Agencies was held on 13th March 2019 in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin. The meeting was chaired by Ms Pamela Byrne, Chairperson of the Association.

Present

Siobhan Barron, National Disability Authority; Hilkka Becker, International Protection Appeals Tribunal; Angela Black, Citizens Information Board; Garret Blaney, Commission for Communications Regulation; Carol Boate, Office of the Regulator of the National Lottery; Maurice Buckley ACESA Alumni; Pamela Byrne, Food Safety Authority of Ireland; Patricia Byron, ACESA Alumni; Fionnuala Croke, Chester Beatty Library; Renee Dempsey, ACESA Alumni; Ray Dolan, Safefood; Eugene Donohue, ACESA Alumni; Patricia Gilheaney, Office of the Inspector of Prisons; Isolde Goggin, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission; Teresa Griffin, National Council for Special Education; Ginny Hanrahan, CORU; Paul Healy, Skillnet; Mary Higgins, ACESA Alumni; Andy Kelly, Irish Blood Transfusion Service; Ita Kinahan, The State Laboratory; Chris Lehane, Insolvency Service of Ireland; Owen Lewis, ACESA Alumni; Cathy Mannion, Commission for Aviation Regulation; Helen Martin, Charities Regulatory Authority; John McDaid, Legal Aid Board; Paul McGowan, Commission for Regulation of Utilities; Sharon McGuinness, Health and Safety Authority; Pat Meehan, National Oil Reserves Agency; Michael Nolan, Transport Infrastructure Ireland; Ronan O'Domhnaill, An Coimisineir Teanga; Tomas O'Ruairc, The Teaching Council; Marian O'Sullivan, Institute of Public Administration; Jim O'Toole, Bord Iascaigh Mhara; Liz Pope, Property Registration Authority; Kevin Prendergast, Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority; Phelim Quinn, HIQA; Paul Scallan, Private Security Authority; Susan Steele, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and Padraig Walsh, Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

Apologies

Colin Bray, Ordnance Survey Ireland; Ciaran Byrne, Inland Fisheries Ireland; Sandra Collins, National Library of Ireland; Paul Dunne, Local Government Management Agency; Conor Dunne, SOLAS; Aidan Farrell, State Examinations Commission; John Farrelly, Mental Health Commission; Annie Fletcher, Irish Museum of Modern Art; Tony Gaynor, Royal Irish Academy; Niall Gibbons, Tourism Ireland; John Leech, Irish Water Safety; Muireann Ni Mhorain, An Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaiochta; Conor O'Brien, Injuries Board; John O'Connor, Housing Agency; Michael O'Keeffe, Broadcasting Authority; Barry O'Leary, Housing Finance Agency; Sean Rainbird, National Gallery of Ireland; Yvonne Shields, Commissioners of Irish Lights; Nessa White, Education and Training Boards Ireland; Laura Burke, Environmental Protection Agency; Rosalind Carroll, Residential Tenancies Board; John Leech, Irish Water Safety and Chris Enright Forensic Science Ireland.

In attendance

Mary Rose Tobin (Company Secretary); Shay McGrath of Ronan Leech and Company (Auditors)

1 Opening Remarks

Pamela Byrne, Chairperson, welcomed all members to the meeting. She extended a special welcome to those CEOs/Agencies who joined in 2018. She commented on the fact that we now have 90 members which is a very positive indication of continuing interest in the Association.

The Chairperson thanked her fellow Board members for their contributions to the Association's business throughout the year and remarked that the regular sharing of ideas and information within the Board is extremely useful.

The Chairperson outlined the activities undertaken by the Association's Secretariat. She acknowledged the efforts of the Secretariat and thanked Mary Rose Tobin for her work on the Association's behalf.

Following these introductory remarks, the Agenda for the meeting was reviewed and adopted.

2 Minutes of ACESA AGM 7th March 2018

The minutes of the Sixth AGM, held on 7th March 2018, were reviewed and agreed with one small amendment. They were proposed by Andy Kelly, seconded by Patricia Gilheaney and adopted by the meeting.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

At the previous two AGMs, it was suggested that ACESA should consider holding a conference. Marian O'Sullivan, IPA has expressed an interest in taking this on and hosting an IPA/DPER/ACESA type conference on the themes of Innovation/strategic workforce/digital planning, towards the end of 2019 or in early 2020.

The Board and members are interested in revisiting the Code of Governance and the opinion was expressed that some parts are very onerous and too heavily biased toward commercial agencies. This is something that affects us all. As we are in a position to provide wider feedback, we should consider undertaking some evidence-based surveying during the year, on foot of which we can look at colleagues' experiences in this regard.

4 Presentation of Annual Report (Chair)

The Association's Annual Report for 2018 had been circulated to the membership in soft copy in advance of the meeting and it was proposed to distribute it in hard copy to key stakeholders of the Association in due course. As she presented it to the meeting, the Chairperson commented on the value of the Annual Report as a reference document for members.

Membership and Annual Survey

At the end of 2018, there were 90 members of the Association. Each year inevitably sees some departures, but thankfully, there are usually enough new applications to keep the membership at a healthy level.

The Chairperson drew members' attention to the results of the Annual Survey which, she commented, provide a rich source of evidence and information on the composition and diversity of the state agency sector in Ireland. She noted that within this diversity are common experiences, concerns and aspirations. It is these that inform member events and provide evidence from which members can draw.

The Survey provides a rich source of data for our interactions with Government.

The 2018/2019 Survey was launched in November 2018. The response rate to the survey is running at 76%, somewhat lower than in previous years. Noting how easy it is to return the survey, which arrives pre-populated with the previous years' answers, the Chairperson urged members to complete the survey when asked and bring the response rate back up to previous levels.

ACESA Events

In 2018, the Association ran eight Breakfast Briefing sessions on topical issues, delivered by relevant and connected speakers.

The Chairperson told the meeting that during 2018 these sessions continued to be the cornerstone of our activities and during the year we heard from excellent speakers, leaders in their specific fields of expertise, who provided stimulating, inspirational and sometimes challenging inputs. These sessions allowed for robust discussions and time to deliberate on issues of strategic importance to CEOs but equally beneficial, they provided a great networking opportunity for members.

It is helpful to the Board for members to provide input to the planning of the meetings by suggesting what should be discussed and how the meetings should be organised. To this end, we regularly run an on-line consultation survey with members.

ACESA Events continued

Last year, most members got to three or four meetings, with a couple of members attending seven of the eight events. Eleven people did not attend any meeting at all.

Through close attention to the findings of the consultation, we hope to arrive at a situation where every member can find at least one or two meetings to suit their needs.

Research Reports

During the year, we completed two pieces of research work – on Innovation and HR Practices – and this, the Chairperson noted, was possible because members took the time to answer the surveys and develop the case studies. The reports, completed by Fiona Ross, ACESA Alumnus, have served ACESA well in discussions with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in the context of the Reform Programme. We will continue to consider how this approach could be used in the future.

5 Adoption of Annual Report

Following the Chair's presentation, members had an opportunity to comment from the floor on the Annual Report and its contents. The Chairperson moved that the Annual Report be adopted, and this was agreed by a show of hands. It was proposed by Isolde Goggin and seconded by Angela Black.

6 Presentation of Accounts (Treasurer)

Ginny Hanrahan (Treasurer) presented the Association's accounts for 2018.

She pointed out to the meeting that, as a company, we are required to produce accounts in the format required under the Companies Act. Then, she outlined the main aspects of the Financial Report.

Copies of the financial statements had been circulated in advance of the meeting. They represented a professional job on the part of the auditors, Ronan Leech and Company and gave the Association a clean bill of health.

She outlined the comparison between 2017 and 2018 and explained any significant variances. Spending in 2018 was a little higher which was accounted for in the main by the production of the two research reports.

She assured the meeting that the Association is maintaining an ongoing reserve adequate to its needs.

The Auditor, Shay McGrath, said a few words at this point indicating that the books are well kept, and the auditors have ready access to any information they need to complete the audit and give the Association a clean bill of financial health.

7 Adoption of Accounts

There were no queries from the floor, so the accounts were proposed by Sharon McGuinness, seconded by Ita Kinahan and adopted.

8 Appointment of Auditors

A proposal to reappoint the auditors for a further term was put to the meeting, and as there were no objections this was agreed. Siobhan Barron proposed, and Andy Kelly seconded.

9 Work Plan for 2019

In outlining the work plan for the coming year, the Chairperson indicated that the Association would be following the usual pattern of breakfast meetings and events.

In 2018, we increased our engagement with the public sector reform programme "Our Public Sector 2020" through our membership of the Public Sector Management Group, a key group involved in the implementation of the reform programme. This engagement will continue.

Finally, she gave an undertaking that any matters raised by the AGM would form an integral part of the 2019 work plan.

10 Election of Board Members 2019 – 2021

The Chairperson reminded the meeting that in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, fifty per cent of the Board, or the longest serving members, must step down at the AGM, though they are eligible to go forward for re-election.

On this occasion, there were five vacancies arising, with expressions of interest from five members, so there was no need for an election at the AGM. The nominations were put before the meeting in the normal way with proposers and seconders.

The 2019-2020 Board is constituted as follows:

Pamela Byrne (Chairperson)	Food Safety Authority of Ireland	pambyrne@fsai.ie
Padraig Walsh (Vice Chairperson)	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	pwalsh@qqi.ie
Ginny Hanrahan (Treasurer)	CORU	ginny.hanrahan@coru.ie
Tomás Ó Ruairc	The Teaching Council	toruairc@teachingcouncil.ie
Phelim Quinn	HIQA	pquinn@hiqa.ie
***Rosalind Carroll**	Residential Tenancies Board	rosalind.carroll@rtb.ie
***Ray Dolan**	SafeFood	rdolan@safefood.eu
***Patricia Gilheaney**	Inspector of Prisons	pcgilheaney@inspectorofprisons.gov.ie
***John McDaid**	Legal Aid Board	jamcdaid@legalaidboard.ie
***Marian O'Sullivan**	Institute of Public Administration	mosullivan@ipa.ie

*Denotes new members.

The Chairperson wished these members a successful term of office.

11 Any Other Business

Teresa Griffin proposed a vote of thanks to those members who put their names forward to serve on the Board.

The membership made a presentation to Mary Rose Tobin who is retiring later in the year.

Open Forum

At this point in the meeting, the proceedings were given over to the members in an open forum. Tomás chaired this session using the Mentimeter package as a visual aid. Member contributions are noted separately.

As there was no other business thereafter, the meeting concluded.