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Celtic Honours Luncheon & AGM Wrap Up

The Celtic Council of Australia held its Annual Honours Luncheon at Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Association on Saturday 25 October. The occasion recognises individuals who have given honourable service to the Celts in Australia. The honour of Duine Uasal (Honoured Person) was given to Seán McLoughlin, and the honour of Duine Urramach (Noble Person) was given to Lorna Barrow.



Nominated by Scoil na Gaeilge Sydney and Comhaltas Sydney, the Celtic Council of Australia has great pleasure in declaring Seán McLoughlin Duine Uasal, 'honoured person'. Sean has been a tireless advocate for Irish language, music and culture in Australia. He is a gifted and generous teacher whose energy and enthusiasm make every learner feel welcome and supported, teaching at Irish language camps and schools across the country. He is an accomplished musician who leads traditional sessions and teaches traditional Irish instruments. His ability to bring people together through music and language has made him deeply beloved in the Irish community. In raising the profile of Irish culture in Australia in profound and lasting ways, he embodies the spirit of service, generosity, and cultural pride that the Celtic Honours exist to celebrate. He is president of Scoil na Gaeilge Sydney, and has led the school to intense growth in enrolments and impact beyond the classroom through immersive outings and a Bealtaine festival.



Nominated by the Scottish Australian Heritage Council and Suzanne Jamieson, the Celtic Council of Australia has great pleasure in declaring Lorna Barrow Duine Urramach, 'noble person'. Lorna has been a member of the Scottish Australian Heritage Council executive committee for over ten years, organising many of the Sydney Scottish Heritage Week lectures, and the Sydney Society for Scottish History for over fifteen years, including ten as joint journal editor. She served on the committee of the University of Sydney Celtic Studies Foundation for twelve years, assisting with the organisation of several conferences.



Following the awards there was wonderful entertainment by the Penrith Gaels Maher-Lenihan Irish Dancers, who captivated everyone in attendance. It was also wonderful to have Consul-General of Ireland, Lorraine Christian in attendance. The awards were presented by president Pamela O'Neill T En E. It was great to have a photo booth and photos by Jacinda Udo-Dean. A small raffle added to the sense of occasion.



all photos by Jacinda Udo-Dean (Lucky Stars Photography)

Our AGM was held following the Luncheon and we elected the new committee for 2025. We saw a couple of changes to our committee: while Pamela remains our president and Jessica our secretary, we have a new deputy president Tiffany and a vacancy in the treasurer position. Previous treasurer Peter is kindly acting in the role until we can fill the vacancy.

Our president gave the following report on the year's activities:

This has been my third year leading the Celtic Council of Australia, and I would like to thank all of the Standing Committee members for their support and hard work throughout the 2024–2025 committee year. I am particularly grateful to our Deputy President, Veronica Hannon, who has indicated that, due to other commitments, she will not be seeking re-election to the Standing Committee at this AGM. Veronica's support for the Council and our events has been hugely appreciated.

This year we continued with our work of increasing our engagement with our constituent communities. We have welcomed more organisations as members of the CCA, and look forward to working with them in mutually beneficial partnerships. Representing the CCA, I attended the Australian Celtic Festival, CelticFest Warwick

Standing Committee also attended various events, in addition to their separate roles in organising such events.

The CCA sponsored the Australian Celtic Festival's Eisteddfod at Glen Innes in May 2025, and is currently finalising a memorandum of understanding to conduct an annual Australian Celtic Eisteddfod as part of the festival. Petar and Jessica Grulovic played, and will continue to play, an important role in the Eisteddfod, generously contributing their expertise as judges and much more.

We also sponsored the Scoil Gaeilge Samhraidh at Minto in January, the Australian Highland Dancing Festival at Penrith in September, and gave financial support to a University of Sydney student to further her study and research in Ireland and Scotland. It has been wonderful to see Celtic communities continuing to flourish around Australia through events like language schools, music festivals, and cultural gatherings, and to respond positively to requests that we support, financially and otherwise, some of these events.

Behind the scenes, the Standing Committee spent a good deal of time this year refreshing our core values and objects and aligning them with intentional goal-setting. Some of the projects have already borne fruit; the Australian Celtic Eisteddfod has been established, and our monthly CCA email newsletter, edited by Natalie O'Neill, has expanded to include an additional quarterly special newsletter. We have continued to digitize and archive the records of the CCA, increasing our coverage to several private collections of CCA-related papers. I would like to thank Peter Grimes, who has managed this project, and Natalie O'Neill, who arranged access and photographed one of the collections. Our online archive of digitized records, which is continually being added to, forms a valuable historical record of the CCA's activities over our 43 years of existence.

We have continued to award Celtic Honours during the year, at the Australian Celtic Festival and our own Celtic Honours Luncheon. Details of these awards can be found in the relevant issues of our newsletter.

We look forward to continuing with our strategic objectives in 2026, working with our communities to maintain and promote Celtic culture through language, tradition, creative and performing arts around Australia.

Best wishes,
Pamela, Celtic Council of Australia President

You can find out more info about the Celtic Honours and how to nominate someone at <https://www.celticcouncil.org.au/#CH>



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