

Irish Tourism Sector at Tipping Point: ITIC Conference to Address Urgent Challenges

- *“Skyrocketing costs are imposing unsustainable burdens on an industry that is vital to Ireland’s economy,” says ITIC CEO Eoghan O’Mara Walsh*
- *High-profile speakers across politics, economics, technology and entertainment at Conference on September 25th*
 - *Industry calls for restoration of 9% VAT rate for food related services in 2025*

29th August 2024: The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) today issued a stark warning about the future of Ireland’s tourism sector during the launch of its annual conference, scheduled for September 25th. This year’s event, supported by Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, and AIB, will be held at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre.

Speaking at the launch, ITIC CEO Eoghan O’Mara Walsh said, *“The tourism industry is at a critical tipping point with skyrocketing costs imposing unsustainable burdens on an industry that is vital to Ireland’s economy. With Budget 2025 on the horizon, it’s imperative that the government reintroduce the 9% VAT rate and invest appropriately in the sector to ensure its survival.”*

O’Mara Walsh also highlighted the outcome of ITIC’s meeting with Minister for Finance Jack Chambers and Minister for Public Expenditure Paschal Donohoe which took place yesterday (Wednesday 28th August) where the sector’s urgent needs were underscored. *“It was a constructive discussion,”* he noted, stressing that the Ministers are acutely aware of the difficult situation. The talks also pointed to the pressing need to lift the passenger cap at Dublin Airport, which is seen as crucial for the future of Irish tourism.

Set to take place just a week before the Budget and on the brink of a General Election, the September 25th conference promises to deliver stimulating discussions and thought-provoking conversations. In addition to tackling key issues affecting the industry’s prospects, delegates will explore how the sector can grow while reducing its carbon footprint. The event will also provide a valuable networking opportunity for industry colleagues and peers.

This year’s conference, hosted by journalist and broadcaster Dearbhail McDonald, is themed ‘Responsible Ambition’ and will explore how innovation and sustainability can help the tourism and hospitality industry thrive in these challenging times. The stellar lineup of speakers includes Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin, award-winning broadcaster Jon Sopel, tech expert Jess Kelly, Irish satirist Oliver Callan, and economist Jim Power.

Today’s photocall at Dublin Castle featured key figures such as Fáilte Ireland CEO Paul Kelly, Tourism Ireland CEO Alice Mansergh, AIB’s Jonathan Clarke, and ITIC CEO Eoghan O’Mara Walsh, all of whom will play pivotal roles at the upcoming conference.

Tickets for the conference are available at www.itic.ie/conf24.

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For further information contact: Astrid Brennan, FleishmanHillard, M: 0862154883