



“Resilience in an Uncertain World” – Flagship tourism conference announced for October 1st in Kilkenny

Competitiveness, connectivity and investment key concerns for tourism leaders

“Tourism at a critical juncture” according to industry body with year-to-date CSO numbers -11%

Dublin, 28th August 2025

Announcing details of their annual conference the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) today said that CSO numbers for tourism show the industry is at a critical juncture and that the sector must be supported in Budget 2026.

The conference entitled ‘Resilience in an Uncertain World’ will take place on October 1st in Lyrath Estate in Kilkenny and will be moderated by award-winning broadcaster Dearbhail McDonald. Speakers include tech entrepreneur Mark Little, Minister for Tourism Peter Burke TD, hospitality expert Francis Brennan, Chair of Fáilte Ireland Ruth Andrews, Dalata CEO Dermot Crowley, Irish Heritage Trust’s Anne O’Donoghue, economist Jim Power, TV personality Timmy Mallett and former Ambassador Dan Mulhall.

“This is a time of unprecedented macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty” said ITIC’s Chair and Cork Airport MD Niall MacCarthy *“The conference is timely and will take place a week before the Budget and tourism performance, priorities and policies are all on the agenda”*.

The conference was launched this morning by ITIC CEO Eoghan O’Mara Walsh, Tourism Ireland CEO Alice Mansergh and AIB’s CEO Colin Hunt who are all speaking at the conference. Director of Fáilte Ireland Deborah Nolan was also in attendance.

CSO numbers for the first 7 months of the year point to an 11% decline in inbound visitor numbers and O’Mara Walsh said *“Demand is very mixed and when allied to escalating costs of business, margins are under real pressure. Budget 2026 is vital for the sector, and the hospitality VAT rate needs to be restored to 9% as per the Programme for Government”*.

Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industry and biggest regional employer and ITIC have called Dublin Airport *"the key tourism gateway to the island"* and urged that the passenger cap be lifted without delay.

O'Mara Walsh said *"The case for investment in tourism is indisputable with an enormous return to the exchequer. We need to defend our position in the US market while diversifying into other jurisdictions in these uncertain times. Investing in Brand Ireland is critical if we are to spread demand across other source markets"*,

Tickets to ITIC's conference cost €190 + Vat and a full agenda and details can be found at www.itic.ie/conf25.

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