

Date: September 5th 2018

Minister Griffin launches Irish Tourism Industry Awards

Awards celebrate excellence and innovation in Irish tourism

Submissions now open on www.irishtourismindustryawards.ie



Pictured at the launch of the Irish Tourism Industry Awards 2019 were: Minister of State for Tourism & Sport, Brendan Griffin TD, with Conor Hennigan, Managing Director of Hennigan Hospitality Services and Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation

Wednesday, September 5th 2018: Minister of State for Tourism & Sport, Brendan Griffin TD, today launched the Irish Tourism Industry Awards. The awards, which take place every two years, are organised by the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry partners.

The Awards celebrate excellence, innovation and success within tourism, Ireland's largest indigenous industry and one that employs 254,000 around the country. The ceremony event will take place on February 1st 2019 in Dublin. 15 awards will be presented on the night and submissions can be made on www.irishtourismindustryawards.ie. The Awards cover regional tourism experiences, access initiatives, festivals and food tourism innovations amongst others.

Speaking at the launch of the Awards, Minister Griffin said: "Tourism is a key sector for the Irish economy and it is only right and proper that there is a national event to acknowledge and celebrate the best companies, operators and initiatives in this vibrant industry".

Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, CEO of ITIC, said: "The Awards are organised by industry with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland and are a flagship event within the tourism calendar – I encourage tourism businesses – big and small – to enter the Awards"

Paul Kelly, CEO of Fáilte Ireland, welcomed the inclusion of Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and Dublin as Award categories and anticipated a high level of entries of significant calibre: "Tourism is one of the very few sectors which can penetrate all regions of Ireland and the quality and depth of Ireland's tourism offering continues to improve and excite".

A Special Recognition Award will also be presented to IAG CEO Willie Walsh to reflect his contribution to Irish tourism. O'Mara Walsh said "We are delighted to present Willie with a Special Recognition Award – his work as CEO of Aer Lingus, and latterly as CEO of IAG, has been instrumental in delivering positive change to Irish tourism and we look forward to saluting him on the night".

Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland, said: "Overseas tourism is enjoying considerable success at the moment and all markets are performing well. Tourism Ireland is delighted to support the awards once again and we anticipate a great event."

Industry sponsors of the Awards include Aer Lingus, Irish Ferries, Cork Airport, Shannon Group, the Incoming Tour Operators Association, CIE Tours, Dublin Port, Guinness Storehouse, OPW, Waterford Crystal, Jameson Visitor Centres, Stena Line and the Irish Hotels Federation.

The Irish Tourism Industry Awards take place on February 1st 2019 in the Clayton Hotel Burlington Road, Dublin 4 and submissions can be made up to **October 31st** on www.irishtourismindustryawards.ie. An independent judging panel selects the winners, who will be announced at the Awards event, which will be hosted by Master of Ceremonies, Kathryn Thomas.

For further queries please contact:

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Notes to Editor:

About the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation:

The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation was founded in 1984 and is the umbrella group representing the leading tourism interests in Ireland. The full strategy can be seen on www.itic.ie. Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industries and is a critical component of the export economy. Key tourism facts:

- Worth €8.7 billion annually
- 8.9 million staying international staying visitors in 2017
- Tourism employs 254,000 nationally
- 1 in 10 jobs nationally are in tourism & hospitality sector
- According to Fáilte Ireland, for every euro spent by tourists 23c is generated in tax

Award Categories:

- Best International Marketing Initiative
- Best New International Access Initiative
- Best *Wild Atlantic Way* Tourism Experience -large & small
- Best *Ireland's Ancient East* Tourism Experience – large & small
- Best *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands* Tourism Experience
- Best *Dublin* Tourism Experience – large & small
- Best Festival / Event Experience
- Best Food/Beverage Experience
- Best *Meet in Ireland* Business Tourism Innovation
- Best Environmental Tourism Innovation
- Best Innovative Place to Stay
- Best Entrepreneurial Tourism Initiative



Pictured at the launch of the Irish Tourism Industry Awards 2019 were: Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation with (L-R) Joan O'Shaughnessy, Chair of Tourism Ireland and Orla Carroll, Director of Strategic Development at Fáilte Ireland



Pictured at the launch of the Irish Tourism Industry Awards 2019 were L-R: Niall Gibbons, Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Ireland with Orla Carroll, Director of Strategic Development at Fáilte Ireland, and Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation