



Message from the Chair

Niall Buckley SC, Chair, CIARB Ireland Branch

Dear Members,

The Summer 2026 edition of our newsletter represents my first in the role of chair of the CIARB Ireland Branch. I am both delighted and daunted to be trusted by the Committee to lead the Branch this year.

I have only taken up my role in April but it has been a hectic and rewarding few months for the Branch since then.



I would particularly like to thank Catherine, Needham, the outgoing chair and the immediate past committee and special interest groups for their hard work and for leaving the Branch in a stronger position than they found it. I look forward to continuing to work with our committee and executive team as we build on that success.

My priorities as Chair for the year ahead are threefold:

First, to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Branch, through principled governance, and by listening to our members to ensure the Branch's continuing relevance and value to you, our members;

Second, to explore new growth areas for alternative dispute resolution and arbitration and to foster strategic partnerships, as Ireland continues to evolve as a hub for alternative dispute resolution and arbitration; and

Third, to promote and protect the diverse membership of CIARB and its uniquely multi-disciplinary character — a membership that draws its strength from law, engineering, surveying, construction and beyond.

Message from the Chair (continued)

These priorities are already taking shape in our programme for the year. Our 2026 Annual Conference, Future-Focused Arbitration, at the National Gallery of Ireland in May brought together leading Irish and international voices across five diverse panels; our Galway event examined the role of the Standing Conciliator; and our annual construction conference marked ten years of the Construction Contracts Act 2013. I am grateful to the speakers, sponsors and members who made each of these such a success.

I am excited to announce the imminent launch of an out-of-court dispute settlement scheme for disputes between individual users and social media or content-sharing platforms over content moderation decisions. The product of a strong partnership between UK press regulator, Impress and CIARB, this scheme offers an exciting opportunity to deliver the values and efficiencies of alternative disputes resolution to social media users and online platforms.

There is much still to come. You will find details of our autumn programme in this newsletter, including our Annual Dinner on Friday 23 October and Dublin International Disputes Week. Please add these dates to your diary, where your attendance is always welcome. If you have ideas for events, or something you would like us to organise, please do let us know — and check the events section of our website from time to time so that you don't miss anything.

The Committee and I would like to thank you, and our sponsors, for your continued support and enthusiasm, on which we hope to rely in the year to come.

With best wishes,
Niall

Dates for Your Diary

DIARY DATE

SEP **4-5** 2026

Edinburgh International Arbitration Festival

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

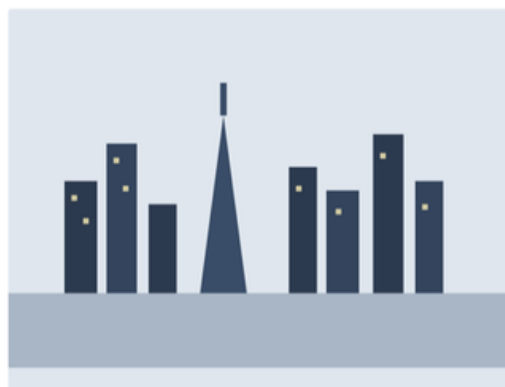


DIARY DATE

SEP **8-10** 2026

Ireland for Law – NYC Business Mission

NEW YORK CITY, USA



DIARY DATE

OCT **19-23** 2026

Dublin International Disputes Week

VARIOUS LOCATIONS, DUBLIN

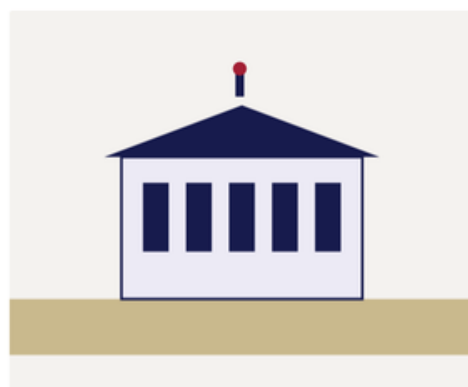


DIARY DATE

OCT **23** 2026

Annual Dinner

THE BANKING HALL, COLLEGE GREEN HOTEL, DUBLIN

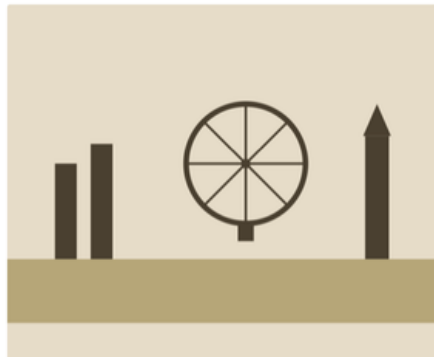


DIARY DATE

NOV **20-21** 2026

Vienna Arbitration Days

VIENNA, AUSTRIA



DIARY DATE

NOV **TBC** 2026

Dublin International Arbitration Day

DUBLIN – VENUE TO BE ANNOUNCED



Expression of Interest

Call for Expressions of Interest for Appointment to Interim Panel of Case Decision Makers - Online Digital Media Out-of-Court Dispute Settlement Scheme

Expressions of interest are sought from suitably legally qualified persons (minimum 7 yrs PQE in Ireland) with experience in alternative dispute resolution and media law for consideration for appointment to an interim panel of case decision-makers in disputes concerning online digital media content.

What it involves

The scheme resolves disputes between users and online platforms over content moderation decisions — covering illegal content, privacy, defamation, harassment, and mis/disinformation.

Who we're looking for

- Legally qualified in Ireland — minimum 7 years PQE
- Accreditation in arbitration or ADR (Ciarb or equivalent)
- Experience in online platforms, digital content regulation, or user rights

Key details

- Interim panel of 2–6 decision-makers from July to December 2026 (with possibility to apply to join permanent panel)
- Approx. 1–1.5 days (8–12 hours) remote, flexible work per week
- Remuneration: £100–£200 per hour (rates approved by Comisiún na Meán)
- Mandatory specialist training provided and funded by Impress

How to apply

Submit application to info@ciarb.ie by 12pm, 20 July 2026 . Include:

- Detailed CV
- Completed Expression of Interest Form (Attached)
- Names of two referees

For more information, visit <https://www.ciarb.ie/upcoming-events/expressions-of-interest-for-appointment-to-an-interim-panel-of-case-decision-makers-for-a-new-out-of-court-dispute-settlement-scheme-under-the-new-eu-digital-services-act.1898.html>



ciarb.
Ireland Branch

Out-of-Court Dispute Settlement Scheme - Online Digital Services Act
Expressions of Interest Sought for Interim Panel of Decision Makers

Expression of Interest

Accelerated Route to Fellowship in International Arbitration

This short, in-person assessment-based course is aimed at practicing lawyers or arbitrators with substantial complex litigation and/or dispute resolution experience (10 years minimum).

On successful completion of the course, you will be entitled to **Membership of the Ciarb** and be eligible for a **Peer Interview for Fellowship**. For further information please refer to programme.

For expressions of interest to participate in the program, please contact info@ciarb.ie. On successful completion of the course, you will be entitled to Membership of the Ciarb and be eligible for a Peer Interview for Fellowship.

Dates to be confirmed Autumn 2026



Part-Time Branch Office Administrator at CI Arb Ireland

Want to be at the heart of Ireland's dispute resolution community?

CI Arb Ireland Branch is looking for an **organised, personable administrator** to help run the Branch and deliver our **events, courses and governance**.

You'll work closely with our Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee. You will handle everything from member and partner relations to correspondence, meeting support, event and course prep, website and social media, and basic bookkeeping.

The role will be:

- 💡 **permanent** (subject to 6 month probation period)
- 💡 **part-time** (20 hours/week)
- 💡 **Dublin-based**, with capacity for **hybrid working** and occasional out-of-hours event attendance (time in lieu applies)

Who we're looking for:

- ✅ **Strong organisational skills** and attention to detail
- ✅ Proficiency in **Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneDrive**
- ✅ **Bookkeeping** know-how, with an understanding of tax and VAT
- ✅ Confidence creating **social media content** and maintaining a website
- ✅ **Discretion and professionalism** handling confidential information

An interest in arbitration and ADR is a bonus!

✉ Contact info@ciarb.ie to find out more.

Arbitration's evolving role in a changing dispute resolution landscape

By Grahame Durcan B. Eng (Hons) MIEI MSCSI MRICS ACI Arb NECReg

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Ireland Branch, in collaboration with Arup, recently hosted a well-attended evening event examining dispute resolution trends in Ireland and the continued relevance of arbitration, particularly in the context of New Engineering Contracts (NEC) and Public Works Contracts (PWC). The event brought together legal, engineering and construction professionals to consider how dispute mechanisms are evolving in practice and the role arbitration continues to play.

The evening featured a presentation by Professor Brian Hutchinson, Associate Professor at University College Dublin and a recognised authority in arbitration and alternative dispute resolution. Professor Hutchinson framed the discussion by challenging the notion that arbitration is in decline, observing that while adjudication and other early-stage mechanisms have become dominant for live projects, arbitration retains important and distinct functions within the dispute resolution framework.

Drawing on experience from Ireland and the UK, the presentation explored how statutory adjudication has reshaped construction disputes, particularly for payment-related issues where speed and cashflow are critical. This was contrasted with arbitration's strengths, including finality, procedural fairness, confidentiality and international enforceability. Arbitration was highlighted as being particularly well suited to complex, expert-led disputes involving issues such as delay, disruption and quantum analysis.



The discussion also examined differences between the PWC and NEC contract suites. PWC was described as placing greater emphasis on dispute management, conciliation and escalation processes, with arbitration acting as a backstop. By contrast, NEC contracts were noted for their focus on dispute avoidance, early communication and proactive contract management, with the intention of preventing disputes from escalating to formal proceedings.

A panel discussion followed, moderated by Mary Liz Mahony of Matheson, with contributions from panellists and experienced practitioners, Fergus Monaghan of Arup and Sean O'Flaherty of Task Consulting. The panellists shared practical insights on the increasing volume of adjudication in Ireland, the circumstances in which conciliation can remain effective, and the reality that arbitration is often reserved for situations where relationships have broken down and a binding determination is required.

The panel also reflected on the cost, time and resource implications of disputes, noting the disruptive impact formal processes can have on project teams.

While arbitration may not compete with adjudication on speed, it was widely recognised as an essential mechanism for resolving disputes that extend beyond payment issues and require a definitive outcome.

The event concluded with consensus that arbitration is far from obsolete. Instead, its role is becoming more targeted and refined, operating alongside adjudication, conciliation and dispute boards as part of a mature and flexible dispute resolution ecosystem, but whereby the mechanisms for Arbitration could and should be developed further for the Irish system so that more time can be focused on the outcomes of the Arbitration itself rather than the rules by which the outcomes will be achieved.



CI Arb Ireland Galway Event Explores the Role of the Standing Conciliator

by David McDonagh

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb) Ireland held what is now becoming an annual event in the West of Ireland on 11 June 2026. The event was well attended and was held at the impressive new Dexcom Stadium, home of Connacht Rugby, kindly sponsored by Galway based company Quantex Quantity Surveyors.



Eric James outlined the Contractor's perspective, highlighting the practical considerations and challenges encountered during project delivery. Denise Kennedy shared insights from the Conciliator's viewpoint, discussing the importance of early engagement between the relevant stakeholders. Finbarr Kenny provided the Employer's Representative perspective, reflecting on the administration of contracts and the role of the Standing Conciliator in supporting project outcomes. Completing the panel, Paul Sheridan of the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) offered the wider industry perspective.

The discussion generated lively engagement from attendees and reinforced the growing importance of collaborative dispute avoidance and resolution processes in delivering successful projects.

CI Arb Ireland, would like to thank the panel members, and all attendees for contributing to a highly informative and enjoyable evening.

"The discussion generated lively engagement from attendees and reinforced the growing importance of collaborative dispute avoidance and resolution processes in delivering successful projects. "

The event brought together professionals from across the construction and dispute resolution sectors for an engaging and insightful discussion on the role of the Standing Conciliator within Irish construction contracts. The topic proved particularly relevant given the reforms to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provisions of the Public Works Contracts that were announced by The Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation on 16 June 2026.

The panel discussion was expertly moderated by Dermot Durack and featured contributions from a range of industry stakeholders, providing attendees with a balanced and practical perspective on the operation and value of the Standing Conciliator process.

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Construction Contracts Act 2013... 10 years on

By Danyal Ibrahim, Architect, FCI Arb

CiArb Ireland's ninth Annual Conference on the Construction Contract Act 2013 took place at the prestigious offices of Addleshaw Goddard on Wednesday 24th June. This year's conference celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Act coming into effect and continued the tradition of several panel discussions on key topics concluding with a fireside chat between Mr. Justice Frank Clarke (former Chief Justice of Ireland) and John Trainor SC.

Following a light lunch kindly provided by Addleshaw Goddard, the event commenced with welcome remarks from Ciarb Ireland Chairperson Niall Buckley SC. Mr. Bernard Gogarty, Chairperson of the Ministerial Panel of Adjudicators gave the traditional opening speech.

Mr. Gogarty presented some of the recent statistics of construction adjudication (which will feature in the upcoming annual report) and also discussed the current panel election and expansion in September this year.

Panel 1 was chaired by past Chairperson of Ciarb Ireland Branch Dermot Durack, Director at HF Law. Dermot's panel discussed current caselaw and up to date statistics with Margaret Austin (Partner and Head of Construction at Addleshaw Goddard), Sarah Murphy (Pre-Construction Manager at Carey Developments), Professor Brian Hutchinson (Associate Professor at UCD Sutherland School of Law) and Niall Meagher (Managing Director of Interactive Project Managers).

After the coffee break, Panel 2 was chaired by Paul Brady BL (Barrister and CEDR Accredited Mediator) discussing the Connaughton decision and what constitutes a payment dispute. Paul's panel included Keith Kelliher (Managing Director of Kelliher Associates Quantity Surveyor and the Kelliher Academy), Paula Mary Murphy (Architect and ADR practitioner), and Martin Waldron BL (Barrister and Chartered Quantity Surveyor).

Panel 3, chaired by Addleshaw Goddard's own Siobhan Kenny (Senior member of the Construction and Engineering Team), discussed the long-awaited smash & grab decision in the latest Tenderbids case. Siobhan's panel included John Curtin (Executive Director at PJ Hegarty & Sons), Dr. Deirdre NíFhloinn BL (Barrister specialising in construction and development disputes), Karen Killoran (Partner in the Infrastructure, Construction and Utilities Group at Arthur Cox) and Gerard Monaghan (Chartered Engineer and Panel Member).

The conference concluded with a special fireside chat between Mr. Justice Frank Clarke (former Chief Justice of Ireland) and Mr. John Trainor SC. There was insightful discussion on the inquisitorial role of the adjudicator, the high threshold set by the courts in relation to what constitutes a breach of fair procedures given the swift nature of adjudication as well as some thoughts on adjudicators handling of voluminous submissions from the parties.

There was positive engagement from the room with meaningful discussions prior to the conference close. Ciarb Ireland would like to thank Addleshaw Goddard for their hospitality and for helping to arrange a spectacular event. The conference ended with a wine and canape reception overlooking Merrion Square in the sunshine.



Future-Focused Arbitration: Technological Disruption and New Frontiers

By Mackenzie Ellwood BL and Dermot Malone BL



The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Ireland Branch (CiArb) held its 2026 Annual Conference on Friday 9 May 2026 at the National Gallery of Ireland.

The Conference entitled “Future-Focused Arbitration: Technological Disruption and New Frontiers” addressed many new areas of interest. Leading voices in Irish and international arbitration participated across five panel discussions and addressed current and emerging issues in arbitration, with a particular focus on technology and evolving dispute resolution practices.

The event brought together practitioners, arbitrators, counsel, and industry experts for a series of comprehensive discussions on pressing issues, wrapping up with an enjoyable post-conference networking event in Lennan’s Yard.

Opening and Keynote Address

The day began with a short welcome from CiArb Irish Branch Chair, Mr. Niall Buckley SC. The Hon. Mr Justice Oisín Quinn delivered the keynote address.

This first half of the conference provided a strong overview of both technological developments and sector-specific issues relevant to Irish arbitration practice.

AI and Technological Disruption in Dispute Resolution

This session examined the impact of artificial intelligence and technological change on dispute resolution. The panel discussion was moderated by Gerard Groarke BL and featured contributions from Emma Redmond (Open AI), Stephen Dowling (Trial View), Maged Helmy (Newcode.ai) and Paula Fearon (McCann Fitzgerald).

The panelists explored how AI tools are being integrated into arbitration processes, the opportunities and risks they present, and how practitioners can adapt while maintaining fairness and procedural integrity. The importance of knowledge and training was emphasised by panellists, to ensure that service users are optimising their use of AI as well as its application to practice, whilst protecting themselves and others from the potential harms it might cause.

Sports Arbitration in Ireland

Following a networking session and some well-earned coffee, the second session of the day sports arbitration in Ireland. Sport arbitration continues to be one of the most active and advancing spaces and is instructive in the evolution of the sector as a whole. The panel discussion was moderated by Cormac Ó hOisín SC and featured Antonio de Quesada (Court of Arbitration for Sport – CAS), Louise Reilly SC and Susan Ahern SC.

The discussion covered the unique features of sports-related disputes, the role of CAS, and recent developments in sports arbitration practice within Ireland. In particular, the recent nomination of Ireland as a seat for UEFA arbitrations was discussed in the context of Ireland’s emergent position in the arbitral sector.

Dispute Resolution Reforms to Public Works Contracts

The final morning session addressed reforms to dispute resolution mechanisms in public works contracts. Eamonn Condon SC moderated the discussion which featured Angelyn Rowan (Philip Lee), Damien Keogh SC (DK ADR) and Seán O’Flaherty BL.

This panel examined recent and proposed changes to contractual dispute processes in public sector projects, their practical implications for parties, and how arbitrators and counsel can navigate the updated frameworks. It was once again emphasised that knowledge is key in this space, and having an awareness of the changes that have come into play is critical for practitioners moving forward.

Future-Focused Arbitration: Technological Disruption and New Frontiers

Following the morning sessions, the audience broke for lunch, which was kindly sponsored by Beauchamps LLP, before diving back in for the afternoon panels. The afternoon panel discussions considered conflicts of interest and diversity in panel appointments.

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest in Arbitration

The first afternoon session examined ethical challenges and conflicts of interest in arbitration. The discussion was moderated by Graham Kenny. Louis Flannery KC (Littleton) and Patrick Leonard SC provided a practical application of ethical rules, the management of conflicts, and best practices for maintaining impartiality and integrity in the course of arbitration proceedings. A number of significant arbitration decisions that had taken place in the United Kingdom were discussed, in which Mr. Flannery KC considered the need to disclose conflicts of interest.

Pathways and Delivering Diversity in Arbitral Appointments

The final session of the conference addressed diversity in arbitration, focusing on pathways to increase representation and improve access to arbitral appointments. Sinéad Drinan BL acted as moderator with invaluable contributions from Niamh Leinwather (VIAC), Siobhán Fahey, Arbitrator/Adjudicator and Peggy O'Rourke SC. The conversation explored current barriers, initiatives to promote diversity, and practical steps to deliver more inclusive appointment processes in Irish and international arbitration. Panellists encouraged a progressive outlook on the appointment of younger candidates, and candidates that may have more experience and knowledge of a sector, regardless of gender or legal background. It was observed that a diverse panel of arbitrators can provide insight and practical experience that a less diverse panel could not, fostering a more intuitive outcome for parties and a broader perspective in arbitral decision-making.

The conference concluded with Closing Remarks by Mr Niall Buckley SC, followed by an informal Post-Conference Reception in Lennan's Yard on Dawson Street, to allow for attendees and panel speakers to mingle and discuss upcoming opportunities in the arbitration sphere.

A special thank you to all our speakers, attendees and sponsors.

Future-Focused Arbitration: Technological Disruption and New Frontiers



Fancy a day on the fairways?



*CIARB is exploring interest in bringing back our **annual golf outing** this September!*

Whether you're a seasoned pro or have never held a club, we want you there. Alongside the main event, we're planning **fun taster sessions** specifically for **newcomers** to the game.

It's the perfect chance to network, learn something new, or just enjoy a great day out with the CIARB community.

If you'd be interested in hitting the fairway with us, please **register your interest** by 31 July so we can gauge numbers.

Link to form: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/mKZ5yF90Ap>

CiArb Committee 2026 /2027

Niall Buckley, Chairperson

Brian Hutchinson , Vice Chairperson

Catherine Needham, Ex officio Chairperson

Meg Burke, Secretary

Dermot Malone, Treasurer

Katie Nagle , Public Relations Officer

Emma Payne, Chair, Northern Ireland Branch

Mackenzie Ellwood, Deputy Secretary

Peter O' Malley, Trustee

Danyal Ibrahim

Sean O'Flaherty

David Mc Donagh

Derek C O'Reilly

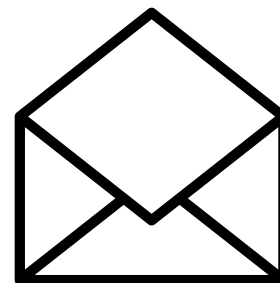
Damien Keogh

Graham Kenny

Alison Kennedy

Tom O Byrne

Jim Armstrong



Get Involved - We'd Love to Hear From You

CiArb Ireland Branch is shaped by its members.

Whether you have a view on our current programme, an idea for a future event, or a suggestion for a new initiative, we want to know.

Thinking about getting more involved — as a **speaker, committee volunteer, or event contributor**? We'd welcome the conversation.

Get in touch:

- info@ciarb.org
- Ciarb.ie

or contact one of our Committee!