



IRELAND v AUSTRALIA

SATURDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

GERRY THORNLEY



HUNGARY v IRELAND

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SHOWDOWN

KEN EARLY

SPORTS WEEKEND

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CAPTURING THE KINGDOM

Renowned ice swimmer Nuala Moore at Clogher Head, with Inis Tuaisceart in the background, on the Dingle Peninsula. The picture features in a new book from Kerry photographer Valerie O'Sullivan, which captures the county in all its glory.

Photo essay
WEEKEND



Spare us from loud co-workers
Brianna Parkins



Miriam Lord's Week in politics

MAGAZINE

PAGE 9

Drivers avoiding bans for speeding

Charitable donations enabled hundreds of motorists to avoid penalty points or a ban

Two cases involved drivers separately detected speeding at more than 200km/h

MARY CAROLAN
Legal Affairs Correspondent

The Government is facing calls to act following revelations that charitable donations enabled hundreds of drivers to avoid penalty points or a driving ban. Several speeding drivers avoided a mandatory two-year driving ban when District Court judge Andrew Cody re-

duced their dangerous driving charges to careless driving after they made donations to charity ranging from several hundred euro to €20,000. Two of those cases involved drivers separately detected speeding at more than 200km/h on a motorway. One paid a €10,000 donation to charity and the second paid €20,000.

Oireachtas transport committee chairman Michael Murphy (Fine Gael) said the “number one issue” was about consistency in the application of the law. “The courts take into account the individual circumstances, but we want to ensure the penalty points system operates fairly and effectively.” In response to a parliamentary question from the Fine Gael TD, the Courts Service this week provided data showing 480 penalty point road traffic offences were struck out between January 2022 and September 2025, benefiting 459 drivers. Those included speeding and other charges such as having no insurance, taking an illegal turn and holding a mo-

bile phone while driving. Mr Murphy said he intended to contact Minister for Justice Jim O’Callaghan about reform of the poor box law, which was pledged about 11 years ago in the wake of a High Court decision that a law making penalty points mandatory superseded the District Court’s common law jurisdiction to allow poor box donations in lieu of convictions. The aim is to achieve a fairer system allowing for a “more proportionate response” reflecting the scale of seriousness of individual offences, he said. Sinn Féin justice spokesman Matt Carthy said there were clear reasons for judicial discretion when it comes to sentencing, but there must also be pub-

lic confidence in law enforcement. “I would be very concerned that someone could drive in excess of 200km/h and not be banned. If laws as enacted by the Oireachtas are not being enforced on an equal basis, that has to raise concerns,” he said. As chairman of the Oireachtas justice committee, Mr Carthy said he intended to pursue the matter with the Departments of Justice and Transport and with other committees “to see how we can advance change”. Prof Tom O’Malley, a sentencing law expert, said he “disparages” decisions enabling some speeding drivers to avoid a mandatory two-year driving ban by making donations to

charity. Such decisions were “entirely inappropriate” given the “clear” wording of the relevant provisions of the Road Traffic Act and ran “counter to the whole idea of impartial justice for everyone”, he said. If a judge believed dangerous driving had been made out on the evidence, a conviction on that charge should follow, he said. The Department of Justice said the judiciary were “subject only to the Constitution and the law, and were independent in the exercise of their judicial functions”. The DPP was contacted for comment.

➔ Why some motorists escape a mandatory ban: page 12



The benefits of reading as Gaelge to your kids

MAGAZINE

Home News

Warning: The far right in Ireland has become more organised, the Garda Commissioner has warned. Page 6

High Court: An application for the termination of a 15-year-old girl's pregnancy has been approved. Page 5

World News



Cop30: After a week when there was much talk of convivial spirit, now the samba Cop turns sombre. Page 15

Weather

The rain will eventually ease with some sunny intervals developing. Scattered showers will continue mainly in the south. Fresh to strong northeasterly winds will ease. Highs of 7-12 degrees.

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JACK POWER
in Brussels

Two Government departments have clashed over a plan to pressure tech giants to stop fraudsters using social media plat-

forms to advertise investment scams, with some senior staff concerned it might harm Ireland's relationship with US multinationals. Officials in the Department of Enterprise raised “serious concerns” about a Department of Finance proposal for new rules limiting who can promote financial investment opportunities online, internal emails show. Enterprise officials warned their finance colleagues the suggested changes would be bad

for business and potentially conflict with the Republic's position as a destination of choice for many Big Tech players. The Department of Finance had proposed tech companies be made to vet those who post adverts promoting financial investment schemes on Facebook, Instagram, X, Google, TikTok and other platforms, in an effort to cut off scams. Tech firms would have to verify that those placing adverts for investments on their sites are genuine financial service

providers registered with the Central Bank. The proposal was put forward late last year during negotiations in Brussels. Typical online scams use images or deep-fake videos of Irish politicians and celebrities to promote schemes promising huge financial returns. The adverts are linked to professional scam centres, usually based in eastern Europe, that deceive individuals into making payments they believe are for legitimate financial investments.

Internal emails show the Department of Enterprise told finance colleagues they had a “major issue” with their proposal to tackle the problem. The suggested reforms would hurt Ireland's economic competitiveness and potentially clash with the EU's existing digital regulations, officials said. “I have serious concerns about the current proposal,” one high-ranking civil servant wrote in a March 14th email. The Department of Enterprise official said Minister for

Finance Paschal Donohoe had noted “the connection between our regulatory environment and the important role the technology sector plays in our economy”, in particular the jobs and investment created by “large, foreign-owned technology firms”. A Department of Finance spokeswoman said it had, “where appropriate, consulted with and taken into account the position of the Department of Enterprise” when making submissions to EU-level talks.



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