



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of AONTAS is to ensure that every adult in Ireland has access to appropriate and affordable learning opportunities throughout their lives, thus enabling them to contribute to and participate in the economic, social, civic and cultural development of Irish society.



AONTAS

The National Adult Learning Organisation
2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street,
Ranelagh, Dublin 6, Ireland

Tel: (0 1) 406 8220/1
Fax: (01) 406 8227
Email: mail@aontas.com

Company Registration: 80958 Charity Registration: 6719

MANY HAPPY RETURNS



AONTAS CELEBRATING 40 YEARS 1969 – 2009

1970

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
Pádraig Faulkner is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Bishops meeting at Maynooth results in the lifting of the ban on Catholic attendance at Trinity College Dublin.
The first Regional Technical Colleges open in Ireland.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Establishment of the AONTAS Constitution. It was approved at the 1970 Annual Conference in Limerick on 17-19 April.

The first AONTAS conference was held. A three-day conference entitled 'Adult Education in the 1970s' was held in Limerick. It was established that the main priority of AONTAS was to 'strive to eliminate educational deficiencies'. A global fight against illiteracy would be initiated by way of pilot projects.

AONTAS becomes affiliated to the European Bureau of Adult Education.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

'All Kinds of Everything,' sung by Dana wins the Eurovision Song Contest for Ireland.

■ WORLD EVENTS

The Concorde makes its first supersonic flight at (700 mph/1 127 km/h).



THE FIRST AONTAS CONSTITUTION

1971

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
Pádraig Faulkner is Minister for Education.
Seán Lemass, Taoiseach from 1959 to 1966, dies in Dublin.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Higher Education Authority Act 1971 is passed.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS submits the first review of adult education to the Government, AONTAS states 'adult education is a marginal interest, however it must be viewed as part of the total educational system.' The review also stressed the importance of both formal and informal adult education.

AONTAS embarks on a radio series 'Careers' in collaboration with RTÉ. This programme was aimed at parents and sought to address questions such as:- When should a boy or girl start to think about their future?- How can a parent help a young person in this matter?- How can a boy get into a trade? - What kind of jobs are there nowadays for girls?- What is a technician? - Can you get a qualification from studying in the evening time?

AONTAS hosts a conference in Wexford entitled 'Social Change, Community Education and the EEC.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Ireland switches to decimal currency.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Portugal resigns from UNESCO.

1972

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
Pádraig Faulkner is Minister for Education.
Taoiseach, Jack Lynch & Minister for Foreign Affairs, Patrick Hillery sign the Treaty of Accession to the European Communities.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Carlow Regional Technical College becomes the first RTC to install a computer. The computer is set to be used for business and engineering courses and uses the Fortran and RPG languages, it costs £10,000.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

The draft of the Murphy Report creates much discussion amongst the AONTAS members.

Inspired by the study-visit in Denmark AONTAS calls for the government to establish permanent Adult Education schools.

UNESCO awarded AONTAS with four scholarships in order to participate in a study visit to Denmark.

A total of 26 AONTAS members went on study tour to France.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Mary Peters becomes the first Irish woman to win a gold medal at the Olympics.

■ WORLD EVENTS

International Human Rights Day is proclaimed by the United Nations.



DR CONOR WARD, DIRECTOR DIAE WITH AONTAS MEMBERS

1973

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fine Gael - Labour Party coalition is in Government.
Richard Burke is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The landmark Murphy Report, 'Adult Education in Ireland', was published. It states: The greatest single need of adult education in Ireland, today, is a definite system, framework and organisation within which it can function, develop and give satisfaction.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS members respond strongly to the Murphy Report stating that it underestimates the work and importance of voluntary groups.

AONTAS welcomes the inclusion of structures and funding for adult education.

AONTAS hosts a conference in Galway entitled 'Lifelong Education Conference.'

Three AONTAS members visit Denmark on a study tour.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The Republic of Ireland, UK and Denmark enter the European Economic Community, which later becomes the European Union.

■ WORLD EVENTS

A patent for the ATM is granted to Donald Wetzel, Tom Barnes and George Chastain.

1974

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fine Gael - Labour Party coalition is in Government.
Richard Burke is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Transition Year is introduced, on a pilot basis to three schools.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS is sponsored by Carroll & Co. Ltd. to the tune of £75,000. The cigarette company will make the donation over the course of 5 years.

AONTAS seeks the appointment of an Executive Secretary; the position attracts an annual salary of £3,000. Michael M. Murphy, previously of University College Cork, is appointed to the role on the 17th September.

AONTAS leaves its host, The Irish Farmers' Association, and moves to 62 Waterloo Road, Dublin.

AONTAS calls on Irish companies to provide adult education courses to its employees. A call is also made for the provision of professional education for Adult Educators.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The great hall of University College Cork became a 900 seat concert hall and home of the RTE Symphony Orchestra.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Ceefax (one of the first public service information systems) is started by the BBC.



MICHAEL MURPHY, FIRST AONTAS DIRECTOR WITH AONTAS COLLEAGUES

1975

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fine Gael - Labour Party coalition is in Government.
Richard Burke is Minister for Education.
Éamon de Valera dies. His life has spanned the history of the Irish State as Taoiseach and President.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Limerick and Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysfort become recognised colleges of the National University of Ireland.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Mr Robert Kelleher is elected the AONTAS President.

At the Annual General Meeting, AONTAS expresses regret at the Government's inactivity regarding adult education.

AONTAS makes a submission to the Department of Education regarding the need for both financial support, and recognition, for adult education. Furthermore, AONTAS expresses regret at the failure to establish an adult education section within the Department.

A submission to RTÉ is made in order to raise awareness about adult education through the media.

AONTAS hosts a conference on Adult Education in Cork.

AONTAS organises a weekend seminar for tutors in adult education in December.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The Druid Theatre Company is founded in Galway.

■ WORLD EVENTS

The United Nations proclaims International Women's Day.

1976

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fine Gael - Labour Party coalition is in Government.
Peter Barry is Minister for Education.
Patrick Hillery is inaugurated as the sixth President of Ireland.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS commissions a research project on the structures and meaning of women's participation in Adult Education.

At the Annual General Meeting, AONTAS members express their dissatisfaction at the lack of creativity within the education system in relation to adult education policy and training.

AONTAS states that adult education is important because:

- 1) Skills and knowledge acquired at school may become obsolete or not sufficient due to a fast changing world.
- 2) Adult education can allow a career path change.
- 3) It is necessary for adaptation to social change and for citizenship.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'The Role of Adult Education in National Development: Rural and Urban.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The Irish rock band U2 is formed.

■ WORLD EVENTS

The first laser printer is introduced by IBM (IBM 3800).



PARTICIPANTS AT THE AONTAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE



1977

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
John Wilson is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The National Literacy Agency (NALA) was established based on the recommendations of AONTAS.
The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland becomes an officially recognised college of the National University of Ireland.
The National Council for Educational Awards is given degree awarding status.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Adult Education and the Media.'

Wisconsin University come to Ireland on a study visit and meet with AONTAS.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The Peace Movement founders, Mairéad Corrigan and Betty Williams win the Nobel Prize for Peace.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Elvis Presley, known as 'King of Rock & Roll' tragically dies at 42.

1978

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
John Wilson is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Dublin Institute of Technology is created on an ad-hoc basis by the City of Dublin VEC.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

The AONTAS Executive Committee criticises the Government's White Paper on Education for not including any reference to adult education.

AONTAS carries out a number of pilot projects focussing on:

- Parents in working class neighbourhoods
- Adult literacy
- Unemployment
- Bridging the gap between North and South

AONTAS constitution redrafted.

AONTAS organises an international conference on Workers Education in collaboration with ITWEA.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

6,000 people march through Dublin to the Wood Quay site to protest the building of civic offices on the Viking site.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Louise Brown the world's first test-tube baby is born in the UK.



NEWLY APPOINTED AEOS GO BACK TO SCHOOL

1979

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
John Wilson is Minister for Education.
Charles Haughey is elected Taoiseach by Dáil Eireann.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

A Governmental working group on paid educational leave was established by the Minister of Education.
Adult Education Organisers (AEOs) are appointed to each VEC. They are the first dedicated staff working on adult education.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS welcomes the appointment of Adult Education Organisers.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Consumer Education' in Sligo.

AONTAS members visit Austria on an educational study tour.

AONTAS hosts a study visit for 36 learners from Wisconsin USA.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

John Paul II visits Ireland.
The first group of Vietnamese refugees arrives in Ireland.

■ WORLD EVENTS

The Sahara Desert experiences snow for the first time. It lasted 30 minutes

1970-1979

40 YEARS
aontas

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

AONTAS establishes itself as an authoritative body for Adult Education in Ireland. Links are built with Government, important sponsors, statutory sector, media and at European level. Notable feature of the decade were the publication of the Murphy Report and the appointment of AEOs.

1980

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
John Wilson is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The National Institute for Higher Education admits its first cohort of students to the college, a total of 200 are enrolled. The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is established. The OECD publishes 'Learning Opportunities for Adults.' The report offers a definition of adult education.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS members organize the first adult education week with the aim of promoting adult learning.

AONTAS hosts the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in its premises in Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

Mr Seamus O'Grady is elected the AONTAS President.

A national directory of adult and community education agencies is published by AONTAS, 'Education for Change,' offers a comprehensive guide to adults seeking to return to learning.

AONTAS applies to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism for a company licence.

AONTAS states its main objective is to promote the development of adult education in Ireland.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Education for Enterprise - A new Dimension for Adult Education.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

'What's another Year' sung by Johnny Logan wins the Eurovision Song Contest for Ireland.

■ WORLD EVENTS

John Lennon shot and killed by Mark David Chapman in front of the Dakota apartment building in New York City.



AONTAS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



MAUREEN NI CHOMAIN AND SILE CONROY

1981

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Gael-Labour coalition is in Government.
John Boland is Minister for Education.

Dr Garret FitzGerald is elected Taoiseach by Dáil Éireann.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS is invited by the Minister for Education, John Boland, to draw up a plan outlining the national adult education needs. It is proposed that this plan will be implemented by the end of 1982 and a special committee for adult education will be established.

AONTAS conducts a consultation process with its members; 'A Philosophy for Action in Irish Adult Education' statement is produced as a result which is submitted to the Government.

AONTAS members organize an Adult Education Week.

AONTAS publishes the report 'Local Issues in Adult Education: Access, Motivation and Participation.'

AONTAS and the Health Education Bureau host a seminar entitled 'Disabled Persons: Participation in Adult Education.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Bobby Sands is elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Fermanagh and South Tyrone on 10th April. He dies on the 66th day of his hunger strike on 5th May in the Maze Prison, Belfast.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Ronald Reagan succeeds Jimmy Carter, as the 40th President of the United States.

1982

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
The position of Minister for Education alternates between Martin O'Donoghue, Charles Haughey and Gerard Brady.
Charles Haughey is elected Taoiseach by Dáil Éireann.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Corporal punishment is banned from schools in the Republic of Ireland. The Irish Commission for UNESCO produces a report on Adult Education in Ireland.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Mr Robin Webster is appointed Director of AONTAS.

AONTAS members organise an Adult Education Week which is officially opened by Minister Martin O'Donoghue.

AONTAS publishes the report 'The Importance of Adult Education in Responding to the Present and Changing Needs of the Society.'

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Community Adult Education.' The French Minister of Education is a high profile speaker at the event; he provides an overview of the importance of lifelong learning.

The European Bureau of Adult Education hosts the conference entitled 'The Use of the Media in Adult Education.' AONTAS members participate on a study tour in the USA. German Adult Educators pay a visit to AONTAS members in Dublin. The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) hosts a conference entitled 'Towards Authentic Development', in Paris.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Ireland mourns the death of Princess Grace of Monaco.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Sony launches the first consumer compact disc player (CDP-101).



LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN, BERTIE AHERN WITH AONTAS DIRECTOR ROBIN WEBSTER



AONTAS DELEGATION MEETS MINISTER FOR EDUCATION GEMMA HUSSEY

1983

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Gael-Labour coalition is in Government.
Gemma Hussey is Minister for Education.
President Patrick Hillery is elected unopposed to a final 7 year term in office.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Government appoints a commission to carry out research and make recommendations regarding adult education. The Kenny Report was published by the Government.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Mr Kevin McBrien is elected AONTAS President.

AONTAS members organize a National Adult Education Month, in Dublin.

AONTAS hosts the conference entitled 'Living without Work: A Role for Adult Education?'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The racehorse Shergar is kidnapped from Ballymany Stud, County Kildare.

■ WORLD EVENTS

The Nintendo Entertainment System goes on sale in Japan.

1984

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Gael-Labour coalition is in Government.
Gemma Hussey is Minister for Education.
Desmond O'Malley founds the political party, the Progressive Democrats.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Minister for Education, Gemma Hussey, announces a new £20 million project to create the transition year in post-primary schools.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS launches its adult education information service.

AONTAS members organize a National Adult Education Month in September.

AONTAS creates a number of subcommittees to focus on research and development.

AONTAS hosts the conference entitled 'Positive Responses to Living without Wages.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

In Dublin women workers in Dunnes Stores, who were on strike in support of a dispute over the handling of South African fruit, begin a sit-in at the store.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Do they know it's Christmas' is recorded to raise money for the famine in Ethiopia.



AONTAS MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN ADULT EDUCATION SEMINAR



AONTAS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1985

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Gael-Labour coalition is in Government.
Gemma Hussey is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Minister Hussey doubles the grant for AONTAS and gives the VECs £1 million over 3 years for adult education through the ALCES budget.

The Post Leaving Certificate programme is introduced in order to provide education and training in order to prepare individuals for work and higher education.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS expands its adult education information service by setting up a hotline for adult education courses.

AONTAS members organize a National Adult Education Month at the RDS in September.

AONTAS hosts the conference entitled 'Community Education,' in Cork.

UNESCO hosts the International conference on adult education, CONFINTEA IV, in Paris.

AONTAS members participate in a study tour to Northern Ireland.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Bob Geldof and Midge Ure organise Live Aid and Ireland is the highest per-capita donor.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and de facto leader of the Soviet Union.

1986

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Gael-Labour coalition is in Government.
Patrick Cooney is Minister for Education.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS works in collaboration with the group IDEA (Improvement in Daytime Education of Adults) in the production of an RTÉ programme 'New Wave.' This results in the publication of a booklet on daytime courses for adults.

AONTAS members organize a National Adult Education Month, in Dublin.

AONTAS and the Workers' Education Association (WEA) host a conference on women's education in Northern Ireland.

AONTAS and the Cork Adult Education Council host a seminar.

AONTAS members participate in a study tour to Scotland.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Knock Airport County Mayo is officially opened.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Desmond Tutu becomes the first black Anglican Church bishop in South Africa.



PAT MCGILL, VICE PRESIDENT OF AONTAS



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MARY O'ROURKE LAUNCHES ADULT EDUCATION MONTH

1987

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
Mary O'Rourke is Minister for Education.
Charles Haughey is elected Taoiseach by Dáil Eireann.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

A budget cut of one third is imposed on the adult education budget, including that of AONTAS and NALA.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS produces the report 'Adult Education in the Gaeltacht.'

AONTAS criticizes the Government regarding its budget cut; it is forced to cut its staff from five to three.

AONTAS members organize a National Adult Education Month in September.

AONTAS hosts a conference on adult education in Limerick.

AONTAS members participate in a study tour to Scotland.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The Irish National Lottery is launched.

■ WORLD EVENTS

World population reaches five billion people with a child born in Zagreb, Croatia, according to the United Nations.

1988

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government.
Mary O'Rourke is Minister for Education.
Charles Haughey is Taoiseach.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Education Reform Act of 1988, widely regarded as the most important single piece of education legislation in Northern Ireland, England, Wales and is published.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Mr Tom Inglis is appointed Director of AONTAS.

AONTAS makes a submission to the Department of Education and Science with a request of a 10% increase in funding for the organization.

AONTAS makes a submission regarding Third Level courses for mature students.

AONTAS produces the report 'Never too Old to Learn: A Study of Education for Older People in Ireland.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

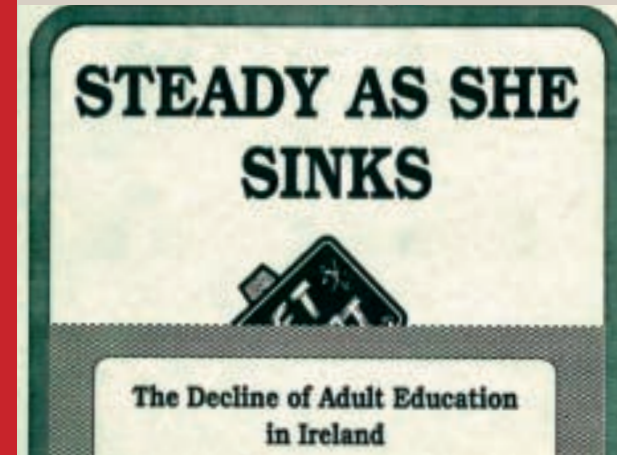
Dublin celebrates its official 1,000th birthday.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Benazir Bhutto is sworn in as Prime Minister of Pakistan, becoming the first woman to head the government of an Islam-dominated state.



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MARY O'ROURKE VISITS ADULT LEARNING EXHIBITION



AONTAS DOCUMENTS THE EFFECTS OF THE CUTBACKS

1989

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrat coalition is in Government.
Mary O'Rourke is Minister for Education.
Charles Haughey is Taoiseach.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Adult Education experiences severe budgetary cutbacks.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Mr Brendan Conway is elected President of AONTAS.

AONTAS produces the report 'For Adults Only: A Case for Adult Education in Ireland.'

AONTAS produces another report 'Steady as She Sinks,' which is written by Detta O'Connor. It concluded that the number of centres offering adult education courses declined by 31% in 1988.

AONTAS hosts the conference entitled 'Education for Enterprise – A New Dimension for Adult Education.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The "Guilford Four" are freed after 14 years in prison.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Fall of the Berlin Wall.

1980-1989



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

AONTAS starts to promote Adult Education through Adult Education Month. Notable features of the decade were the founding of NALA, the first adult literacy budget and introduction of VTOS.

1990

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrat coalition is in Government. Charles Haughey is elected Taoiseach by Dáil Eireann. Mary O'Rourke is Minister for Education.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Ms Berni Brady is elected the AONTAS President.

AONTAS launches a phone-in information service on grants and courses ranging from literacy to Third Level.

AONTAS promotes the contribution made by voluntary groups to the development of adult education in Ireland; as a result the AONTAS voluntary membership expand rapidly.

AONTAS celebrates its 21st birthday, a poem and a picture are produced for the occasion.

AONTAS and ICTU host a conference entitled 'Designing Courses for the Unemployed.'

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'The Development of Adult Education in Ireland: The Contribution of Voluntary Groups.'

AONTAS and ENFO host a conference entitled 'Learning to Live with the Environment.'

1990 marks the UNESCO International Year of Literacy.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Mary Robinson becomes the first female President of Ireland.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Irish writer Brian Keenan is released from Lebanon after being held hostage for 5 years.



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MARY O'ROURKE WISHES AONTAS 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY'



ALAN TUCKETT, DIRECTOR OF NIACE IS WELCOMED BY AONTAS

1991

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrat coalition is in Government. Noel Davern is Minister for Education. Albert Reynolds, Minister for Finance is sacked by the Government.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS publishes the workbook 'From the Personal to the Political'. It aims to assist women's groups to learn more about their own, and others', experiences.

The Annual General Meeting is dedicated to discussing the Green Paper on Education.

AONTAS supports the publication of the journal the 'Adult Learner'.

AONTAS hosts an Adult Learning Exhibition in September.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Information, Guidance and Counselling for Adult Education.'

AONTAS is involved in a study tour to the European Parliament in December.

AONTAS, the French Association AFIP and the Spanish FAEA host a European conference on tutor-training entitled 'Educational Choices for Adults.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

"Birmingham Six" are freed from jail after 16 years.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Collapse of the Soviet Union states declare independence Mikhail Gorbachev resigns as President.

1992

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Labour coalition is in Government. Charles Haughey resigned as Taoiseach. Albert Reynolds is elected Taoiseach. Seamus Brennan is Minister for Education. Proinsias De Rossa forms the political party the Democratic Left.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

13 Institutes of Technology are established under the Regional Technical Colleges.

The Shanty Educational Project, Tallaght, wins the AIB Better Ireland award.

The European funding initiative NOW (New Opportunities for Women) is launched.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS publishes the report 'Liberating Learning' which documented the provision and conditions of daytime adult education.

The AONTAS Adult Learning Exhibition is held at RDS Dublin in September and is attended by over 5000 people.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'From Ireland to Europe: Accessing Funding for Adult Education.'

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Bishop Eamon Casey of Galway resigns his position.

■ WORLD EVENTS

The Maastricht Treaty is signed founding the European Union.



MARGARET PURCELL AT THE AONTAS ADULT LEARNING EXHIBITION IN THE RDS, DUBLIN



MINISTER OF STATE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE, JOAN BURTON LAUNCHES THE AONTAS NOW PROJECT

1993

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Gael – Labour coalition is in Government. Niamh Bhreathnach is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach, pledges the intro of free Third Level education for all over the coming 3 years.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS makes a submission (The Right to Learn) following the Green Paper on Education. It highlights the major issues for adult education: access, funding, information and guidance, accreditation and certification and financial barriers.

The NOW programme provides training to women's groups. The target group were women living in disadvantaged or remote communities who find it difficult to access mainstream training and educational opportunities.

AONTAS establishes the first men's education group.

Ms Berni Brady is appointed Director of AONTAS.

AONTAS calls for a broader based grant system and more funding for community education groups.

AONTAS nominates Joanna Mc Minn and Eilish Rooney for a J. Roby Kidd Citation award. They win for their work on developing a new concept in learning 'The Spiral Model of Learning.'

Ms Mairead Wrynn becomes President of AONTAS.

AONTAS hosts an adult education exhibition in September.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Mother Teresa meets President Robinson at Áras an Uachtaráin.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Bill Clinton becomes 42nd President of USA.

1994

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fail, Labour, Democratic Left coalition is in Government. Michael Smith is Minister for Education. Albert Reynolds resigns as Taoiseach.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Department of Education makes £100,000 available for people on social welfare benefits who wish to return to learning and £200,000 for community education groups. Transition Year is mainstreamed in all secondary schools.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Dr Michael McGreil is elected President of AONTAS.

AONTAS celebrates its 25th birthday.

AONTAS publishes the report 'Can You Credit it?' which centres on the accreditation needs of community education groups.

AONTAS lobbies for an accreditation system for formal and non-formal education.

AONTAS hosts an adult education exhibition in September.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Choice or Chance - Educational Opportunities for Adults dependent on Social Welfare Benefits.'

AONTAS participates in the 'Higher Options' conference on third level education for adults.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

The Provisional IRA announces a complete cessation of military operations.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Nelson Mandela is inaugurated as South Africa's first Black president.



DR MICHAEL MCGREIL IS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF AONTAS



EVA O'CONNELL, DR LIAM CAREY, MARGARET PURCELL AND PADDY BENNIS

1995

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fail, Labour, Democratic Left coalition is in Government. Niamh Breathnach is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

White Paper on Education 'Charting our Education Future' is launched by Minister Niamh Breathnach.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Into the Future.' Its focus is the development of adult education in Ireland into the 21st Century.

AONTAS submits a response to the Government on the White Paper on Education.

AONTAS creates a campaign to abolish fees for evening and distance learning courses.

An AONTAS delegation meets the Minister for Education, Niamh Breathnach. The Minister states that adult education will be given centre stage.

AONTAS organises a seminar 'Can you Credit It,' in order to highlight the accreditation needs of community education groups.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

For the first time in 26 years, no British soldiers patrol the streets of Belfast.

■ WORLD EVENTS

e-Bay is founded.

1996

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fail, Labour, Democratic Left coalition is in Government. Niamh Breathnach is Minister for Education.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Third level fees for full-time courses are abolished. New Opportunities for Women 2 (NOW) is launched.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS lobbies for an accreditation system for learning.

AONTAS publishes a guide to starting your own group for the community sector.

AONTAS publishes 'A Degree at Last,' which contains stories to celebrate the Year of Lifelong Learning.

AONTAS hosts an adult learning exhibition in September.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled 'Empowerment and Action: A New Agenda for Lifelong Learning,' to celebrate the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Ireland's first Irish language television station, Teilifís na Gaeilge (TnG) launched.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Dolly the sheep the first mammal, to be cloned is born in Scotland.



PRESIDENT MARY ROBINSON OPENS THE EMPOWERMENT & ACTION CONFERENCE



MINISTER WILLE O'DEA LAUNCHES 'COUNTING US IN'

1997

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Government - Fianna Fáil & Progressive Democrats. Michael Martin becomes Minister for Education in June. Appointment of the first Junior Minister for Education: Willie O'Dea with special responsibility for Adult Education. Mary McAleese is elected the 8th President of Ireland. Bertie Ahern is appointed 10th Taoiseach.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) highlights that 25% of the Irish population scored at the lowest literacy level. Waterford Institute of Technology offers the first course for literacy organisers. The National Centre for Guidance in Education established.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS and NALA lobby in the run up to the General Election in order to get adult education on the political agenda.

AONTAS commissions a research report 'Counting Us In,' which centres on education for adults with learning disability.

AONTAS carries out research on the Third Level Allowance Scheme.

AONTAS participates in the UNESCO International Conference on Adult Learning, CONFINTEA V, in Hamburg.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

President Mary Robinson is appointed UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Divorce becomes legal in the Republic of Ireland.

1998

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Government - Fianna Fáil & Progressive Democrats. Michael Martin is Minister for Education and Science. Tony Blair becomes the first Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to address the Dáil Éireann.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Government publishes the Green Paper 'Adult Education in an Era of Learning.' VECs in Bray, Drogheda, Sligo, Tralee and Wexford are abolished.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS conducts a study entitled 'Everything to Gain,' which notes that 3/4 of Third Level Allowance Scheme participants successfully complete their degrees.

AONTAS initiates the WENDI programme (Women's Education Network Initiatives), which provides management training to 70 groups across the country.

AONTAS hosts an adult learning exhibition in September.

AONTAS launches its first strategic plan 'A Vision for the Future,' which outlines work for the period 1998-2000.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Good Friday agreement is signed by Irish, British and N.Ireland Political Parties with DUP a notable exception.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Google, Inc. is founded in California by Stanford University Ph. D students.



MINISTER WILLIE O'DEA LAUNCHES THE FIRST AONTAS STRATEGIC PLAN



MONICA BATES READS THE GREEN PAPER ON ADULT EDUCATION

1999

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Government - Fianna Fáil & Progressive Democrats. Michael Martin is Minister for Education and Science.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Minister of Education & Science, Michael Martin, launches a £194 million plan to tackle educational disadvantage. It includes BTEI, Adult Education Guidance Initiative and a €14 million investment in adult literacy.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS members respond to the Green Paper on Adult Education and highlight the current issues in adult and community education:

- Financial barriers for adults wishing to return to education
- The lack of access to mainstream programmes of education and training
- The lack of information and guidance services to suit the needs of adult learners
- The lack of properly funded childcare facilities
- The discrepancy between the opportunities available to the long-term unemployed and those in low-paid jobs
- The lack of progression routes from basic education to higher education and training programs and between the formal and non-formal sectors.

AONTAS, in collaboration with NWCI, hosts the '50/50 Vision: 10 years of New Opportunities for Women' in Kilmainham.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Ten designated ministers are appointed to the power-sharing Northern Ireland Assembly.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Lance Armstrong wins his first Tour de France.

1990-1999

40 YEARS
aontas

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

After surviving the cutbacks, AONTAS establishes a number of initiatives to rebuild the adult and community education sector. Women's community education grew and developed. Notable features of the decade are the NOW programmes, the first AONTAS strategic plan and the appointment of Willie O'Dea as the first Minister of State with responsibility for Adult Education.

2000

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrats coalition is in Government. Michael Martin is replaced by Michael Woods as Minister for Education and Science in January.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Government publishes The White Paper on Adult Education “Learning for Life.”

The National Development Plan for the years 2000-2006 is published, £73.8 million is allocated to the National Adult Literacy Strategy.

KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS responds positively to the White Paper on Adult Education.

AONTAS produces a mature student information sheet which outlines how to apply to college, and the range of qualifications available.

AONTAS embarks on the S.T.A.N.C.E. programme (Strategies to Advance Networks Collective Empowerment). The aim is to develop women's networks as regionally based infrastructures of support in addressing women's social exclusion.

AONTAS works with RTE in the development of a television programme ‘Invisible Movement’, which provides an insight into women's community education.

AONTAS publishes the report ‘Men on the Move’, which takes a qualitative approach to exploring barriers to men accessing education and training initiatives in Ireland.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled ‘Celebrating Difference.’

AONTAS hosts The European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA) General Assembly in Limerick.

NATIONAL EVENTS

The Long Kesh prison in Northern Ireland is closed.

WORLD EVENTS

The world enters Y2K without serious, widespread computer failures.



FINBAR FLOOD LAUNCHES THE AONTAS 3RS CAMPAIGN

2001

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrats coalition is in Government. Michael Woods is Minister for Education and Science.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Government publishes ‘Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education.’

The Government publishes ‘Towards a National Framework of Qualifications.’ The National Qualifications Authority is established.

The Further Education & Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education & Training Awards Council (HETAC) are established. The Minister of Education, Michael Woods, launches initiatives to tackle educational disadvantage: A new statutory Educational Disadvantage Committee is established. A larger Forum to Address Educational Disadvantage is set up. An Acting Director of Programmes to tackle education disadvantage is appointed.

KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS launches its pre-election campaign: 3Rs – Recognition, Resource and Representation.

AONTAS launches its strategic plan 2001-2003 following a consultation process with its members.

AONTAS produces an information referral pack

AONTAS publishes ‘Louder than Words’, which outlines the key concerns of the adult education sector in the wake of the White Paper on Adult Education.

AONTAS publishes the report ‘At the Forefront’, which discusses the need for recognition, resources and representation for adult learning.

NATIONAL EVENTS

The Irish voters reject the Nice Treaty in a referendum.

WORLD EVENTS

al-Qaeda terrorists attack the USA killing almost 3000 people on September 11th.

2002

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrats coalition is in Government. Noel Dempsey becomes Minister for Education and Science in June. Síle de Valera is appointed Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (with special responsibility for Adult Education, Youth Affairs and Educational Disadvantage), in June.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Before he leaves his post, the Minister of State for Adult Education, Mr. Willie O’Dea launches the Back to Education Initiative, establishes the National Adult Learning Council and grants €5 million to 22 women’s projects.

KEY AONTAS WORK

John Ryan is elected as President of AONTAS.

AONTAS publishes a response to ‘Towards a National Framework of Qualifications – A Discussion Document.’

AONTAS publishes ‘Local Structures in Adult Education – A Discussion Paper.’ For the past 30 years AONTAS has been calling for the establishment of effective national and local structures to support and service the development of the adult education sector.

The Department of Education & Science appoints Community Education Facilitators to the Vocational Education Committees in September 2002.

AONTAS holds its national conference entitled ‘Reclaim the Right to Learn’ in Malahide in October.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Euro notes and coins are issued to all participating European countries.

WORLD EVENTS

Euro notes and coins are issued in France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Finland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Austria, Ireland and the Netherlands.



MINISTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION SILE DE VALERA AND PRESIDENT OF AONTAS, JOHN RYAN



SHEILA O’DRISCOLL AT THE LAUNCH OF GENDER AND LEARNING

2003

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrats coalition is in Government. Noel Dempsey is Minister for Education and Science. Síle de Valera is Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (with special responsibility for Adult Education, Youth Affairs and Educational Disadvantage).

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Minister of State for Adult Education, Ms. Síle de Valera announces the fourth television series of ‘Literacy Tuition for Adults.’ Mr. Noel Dempsey, Minister for Education and Science, welcomes the launch of the 2003/04 version of the Qualifax Career Guidance CD in September.

In July 2003, the Minister for Education and Science, Noel Dempsey, published the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill.

KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS publishes ‘Gender and Learning.’ The report looks at the learning styles of women and men and their implications for further education and training.

AONTAS pilots the Women’s Community Education Quality Assurance Framework in partnership with women’s community education groups and networks. The project involved five groups.

AONTAS is invited to deliver The Training and Support Programme for the Community Education Facilitators (CEFs).

NATIONAL EVENTS

“The Spire” on O’Connell Street is officially completed.

WORLD EVENTS

A draft of the proposed European Constitution is unveiled.

2004

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government. Mary Hanafin becomes Minister of Education and Science in September. Síle de Valera is Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (with special responsibility for Adult Education, Youth Affairs and Educational Disadvantage).

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Further Education Section in the Department of Education and Science publishes the 12th Edition of the Guide for Mature Students: Entry to Full-Time Third Level Courses.

KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS launches its Strategic Plan 2004 – 2006 following a consultation process with its members.

AONTAS embarks on a set of regional meetings across the country with the aim of consulting with members on issues pertinent to adult learning.

AONTAS publishes the report ‘S.T.A.N.C.E.’ which presents an overview of the 3 year S.T.A.N.C.E (Strategies to Advance Networks’ Collective Empowerment) project.

AONTAS publishes a report entitled ‘Community Education’ which describes the key developments and elements in the area of community education and the main challenges it faces.

AONTAS hosts a conference entitled ‘Women Learning – An Era of Change.’

NATIONAL EVENTS

The Republic of Ireland bans smoking in all enclosed work places, including restaurants, pubs and bars.

WORLD EVENTS

European heads of state sign in Rome the Treaty and Final Act, establishing the first European Constitution.



PROF. TOM COLLINS WITH BRID CONNOLLY, HON. SECRETARY OF AONTAS



PRESIDENT MARY MCALEESE SPEAKING AT THE AONTAS ‘CITIZEN LEARNER’ CONFERENCE

2005

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government. Mary Hanafin is Minister for Education and Science. Síle de Valera is Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (with special responsibility for Adult Education, Youth Affairs and Educational Disadvantage).

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The Higher Education Authority publishes the report ‘Progressing the Action Plan: Funding to Achieve Equity of Access to Higher Education.’

The Minister of State for Adult Education, Síle de Valera, approves funding for 11 new Adult Education Guidance projects.

KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS make a presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education & Science regarding the needs of the adult and community education sector.

AONTAS hosts a conference in Dundalk entitled ‘Citizen Learner’, to celebrate the European Year of Citizenship Through Education.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Ireland goes metric.

WORLD EVENTS

Pope John Paul II dies, over 4 million people travel to the Vatican to mourn him.

THE WHITE PAPER ON ADULT EDUCATION ‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’

2006

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil is in Government. Mary Hanafin is Minister for Education and Science. Síle de Valera is Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (with special responsibility for Adult Education, Youth Affairs and Educational Disadvantage).

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Minister of Education, Mary Hanafin, announces a 22% increase in the 'top-up' grant for full-time students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The number of Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) places increases to a total of 20,000. The Government publishes 'Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015'.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

The Irish Research Association of Adult and Community Education, IRAACE (at the time RAACE) is officially launched.

AONTAS calls on the Government to abolish fees for part-time Third Level courses.

AONTAS successfully applied for funding from The Wheel's 'Training Links' programme.

At the annual general meeting members call on the Department of Education and Science to recall the National Adult Learning Council (NALC) in order to enable members of the Council to discuss its review and future direction.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Ireland commemorates the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising for the first time since 1971.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Google buys YouTube for USD \$1.65b.



RUTH SMITH SPEAKING AT THE AONTAS AGM



MINISTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION, SEAN HAUGHEY OPENS THE FIRST AONTAS ADULT LEARNERS FESTIVAL

2007

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrats coalition is in Government. Mary Hanafin is Minister for Education and Science. Minister Sean Haughey, appointed Minister of State at the Department of Education & Science and the Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment with special responsibility for Lifelong Learning, Youth Work and School Transport.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

The OECD report 'Education at a Glance' notes an increase in the numbers of students progressing to Third Level in Ireland. The Government announces an increase of 10% in maintenance grants for Higher and Further education students.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS hosts its first Adult Learners' Festival in January. Over one hundred events are held by members across the country.

AONTAS publishes the Information Booklet. It acts as one-stop-shop information resource for any adult wishing to return to learning.

AONTAS holds its first Community Education Network meeting in Dublin.

AONTAS publishes a discussion paper on the lifelong learning needs of older people.

Following a comprehensive consultation process AONTAS produces its Strategic Plan 'Policy, Promotion, Practice and Partnership' which outlines the work for 2007-2010.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Direct rule from Westminster is ended as the Northern Ireland Executive takes control.

■ WORLD EVENTS

European leaders sign the Treaty of Lisbon in Lisbon, Portugal.

2008

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – Progressive Democrats – Green Party coalition is in Government. Batt O'Keeffe becomes Minister for Education and Science in May. Minister Sean Haughey is Minister of State at the Department of Education & Science and the Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment with special responsibility for Lifelong Learning, Youth Work and School Transport.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

Ms Marian Duffy is elected President of AONTAS.

AONTAS hosts the Adult Learners' Festival in February.

The first AONTAS Older Learner Network meeting is held in Galway.

The AONTAS Quality Assurance Framework mainstreaming phase commences.

AONTAS undertakes development education for active citizenship research which is funded by Irish Aid.

AONTAS hosts a conference in Dublin entitled 'Creating Intercultural Communities.'

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) hosts its General Assembly in collaboration with AONTAS.

AONTAS participates in the Pan-European Preparatory Conference for CONFINTEA VI, in Hungary.

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

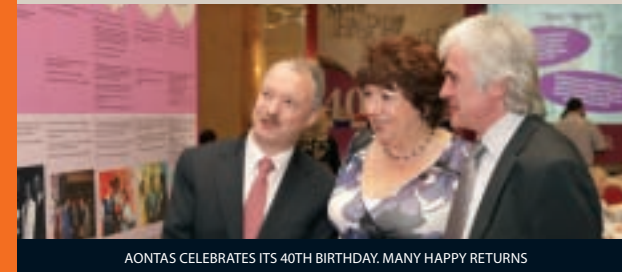
Ireland Votes Against European Union Treaty of Lisbon.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Polar Bear listed as threatened species.



AONTAS PRESIDENT, MARIAN DUFFY WITH BASHY QURAISHY, KEYNOTE CONFERENCE SPEAKER



AONTAS CELEBRATES ITS 40TH BIRTHDAY. MANY HAPPY RETURNS

2009

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT

Fianna Fáil – The Green Party coalition is in Government. Batt O'Keeffe is Minister for Education and Science. Minister Sean Haughey is Minister of State with special responsibility for Lifelong Learning.

■ DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Ireland faces a recession and Budget 2009 confirmed a number of cuts in the adult education sector. The supplementary budget on Tuesday, 7 April 2009 recognised the importance of upskilling and retraining to a degree. Minister for Lifelong Learning, Sean Haughey was reappointed following a reshuffle in April of Junior Ministers, ensuring an important voice for the sector. The Government provides extra places for further education programmes in light of growing unemployment.

■ KEY AONTAS WORK

AONTAS hosts the Adult Learners' Festival in February.

The second AONTAS Senior Learner Network meeting is held.

AONTAS implements The Wheel's 'Training Links' programme to members of the Community Education Network.

AONTAS and Dublin Community Television are successful in a bid for a Sound and Vision fund to create television programmes outlining community education.

AONTAS publishes the research report 'Don't Stop Me Now' on the lifelong learning needs of older adults.

AONTAS celebrates its 40th Birthday. Many Happy Returns!

■ NATIONAL EVENTS

Ireland enters its worst recession since 1930s.

■ WORLD EVENTS

Barack Obama becomes the first African-American President of USA.

2000-2009

40 YEARS

aontas

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Adult and Community Education witnesses its most significant development through the publication of the White Paper "Learning for Life". Notable features of the decade are the establishment of NQAI, the National Adult Literacy Programme, the Adult Education Guidance Service, BTEI and the appointment of CEFs.

1969

**AONTAS
was founded
by Father Liam Carey
and was launched
by Minister Brian Lenihan.
At its First Annual Conference
Mr Sean O'Murchu was
elected President of
AONTAS**