

## **Lower Taxes**

Helping families

*Fairer stamp duty*

**Rewarding pensioners**

*Better Healthcare*

**Tough on Crime**

**PROTECTING OUR  
ENVIRONMENT**



# Welcome

Summary of PD Manifesto  
Full manifesto available at  
[www.progressivedemocrats.ie](http://www.progressivedemocrats.ie)

Our country has made remarkable progress in the past ten years. Over two million people at work, virtual full employment, an end to enforced emigration and the prospect of lasting peace in Northern Ireland. This is progress many of us could not have dreamt of.

This did not happen by accident. It is the fruit of your hard work. It is also the fruit of good, experienced, steady government.

Our economic growth has provided the resources to make unprecedented investment in essential public services such as health, education and in our infrastructure. This investment has improved both Ireland's competitiveness and the quality of life that Irish families now enjoy.

The prosperity that brought this dramatic change was unleashed by the policies of low taxes, competition and investment in innovation and enterprise that the Progressive Democrats championed in government.

Although we have achieved much success, we still face major challenges. Above all, we face the challenge of ensuring that we continue to develop in an environmentally safe way – yet in a way that continues to meet the economic needs and expectations of our growing population.

While there has been some focus on job losses recently, it is important to note that new job gains continue to exceed job losses by a substantial margin. This position will continue only as long as our country continues to be both a magnet for inward investment and a place where Irish businesspeople can invest with confidence.

I invite you to consider our proposals for continued prosperity and progress and to support the return of the Progressive Democrats to government, by voting Number One for our candidate in your constituency.

Michael McDowell, TD  
Party Leader  
*Tánaiste and Minister for Justice,  
Equality and Law Reform*

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**Published by**  
Zahra Publishing Ltd.  
19 Railway Road,  
Dalkey, Co. Dublin.  
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*"Making sure our children are safe and well-provided for is a special task for society. When it comes to the welfare of our young people, the Progressive Democrats take our responsibility in government really seriously. That is why we will invest €12 billion to provide childcare services, child protection and recreational facilities for our children".*

## Helping Families

**Participation in sport is central to the health and well-being of our children and the nation.**



Our Sports Policy is aimed at encouraging and facilitating increased participation and access to sport and physical activity by providing community-based, multi-faceted sports facilities at local level. We will deliver more local swimming pools, and a new network of community sports complexes across the country. To further help our young people, we will provide funding to encourage the establishment of more youth cafés nationwide, and create a corps of professional trainers to co-ordinate voluntary youth activities in communities.

*In our rapidly changing Ireland, one truly welcome change has been for our children. There has been a massive reduction in poverty in this country in the past decade with at least 250,000 people lifted out of deprivation. Some 100,000 of these were children.*

The economic and social policies spearheaded by the Progressive Democrats have helped deliver a large increase in employment and large increases in the level of social welfare payments, particularly in recent years. The increase in employment has led to increased demands on our time – particularly for those with children.

We recognise that balancing family and work commitments is a real challenge in modern society, and we know how important it is to spend quality time as a family, to share together in everything that our new Ireland has to offer. Here we present just a few of our ideas to make sure Irish families and children have what they need to prosper together in the new Ireland.

### Key Progressive Democrats proposals:

- 1 Increase the children under-6 payment from €1,000 to at least €2,000 per year.
- 2 Provide an extra 50,000 new childcare places by 2010.
- 3 Make schools accessible to students outside normal school hours to help commuting parents.
- 4 Provide one year's free community based pre-school initially for children from low-income families, and extending it to all children over time.
- 5 Deliver social housing for 60,000 new households.
- 6 Increase child benefit payments to address any rising cost of living.
- 7 Create a new Child Protection Unit for all issues related to child welfare in our education system. Guarantee a joint-organisational response to child welfare cases and ensure that every school produces a localised, school-specific anti-bullying programme – every year.
- 8 Invest €60 million in the National Children's Strategy to advance the interests and well-being of our children.



*"Over the past 20 years, only when the Progressive Democrats were in government have we seen major reductions in the tax burden. Low taxes on hard-working families and enterprise have always been at the heart of our policy. Not only because this is fair, but because it creates the economic dynamism that enables us to meet our social priorities."*



**Put the PDs in the next government, and we will:**

## Lower Taxes

*Since we returned to office in 1997, the standard tax rate has been reduced from 26% to 20% and the top rate from 48% to 41%. At the same time, tax credits that favour the lower paid were introduced and the level of income at which people face the top rate of tax increased dramatically. As a result, today:*

### Q&A

**QUESTION** I am worried about increasing job losses in the multinational sector. What will the PDs do?

**ANSWER** The Progressive Democrats will build on the recommendations of the Enterprise Strategy Group to (i) invest heavily in skills, education and training, (ii) increase R&D funding by the State and (iii) get the IDA to target sales and marketing and European HQ projects to locate here.

- Nobody earning the minimum wage pays income tax.
- A single person on average earnings pays only 9% of their salary in tax, as against 22% in 1997.
- The top 1% of income earners pays over 20% of the total income tax take.

This has resulted in a level of economic activity that has generated sufficient revenue to enable us to invest substantial resources in critical areas such as health, education, poverty reduction and infrastructure. It has also allowed us to almost halve the National Debt from 64% to 23% of national income.

We will continue a progressive and prudent programme of tax reductions and reforms (see box) that will ensure that you and your family continue to share in the fruits of economic growth. This programme will also ensure that we have sufficient resources to continue to improve public services and infrastructure, without recourse to borrowing.

In fact, under our prudent approach, by 2013 Ireland will have no net national debt.

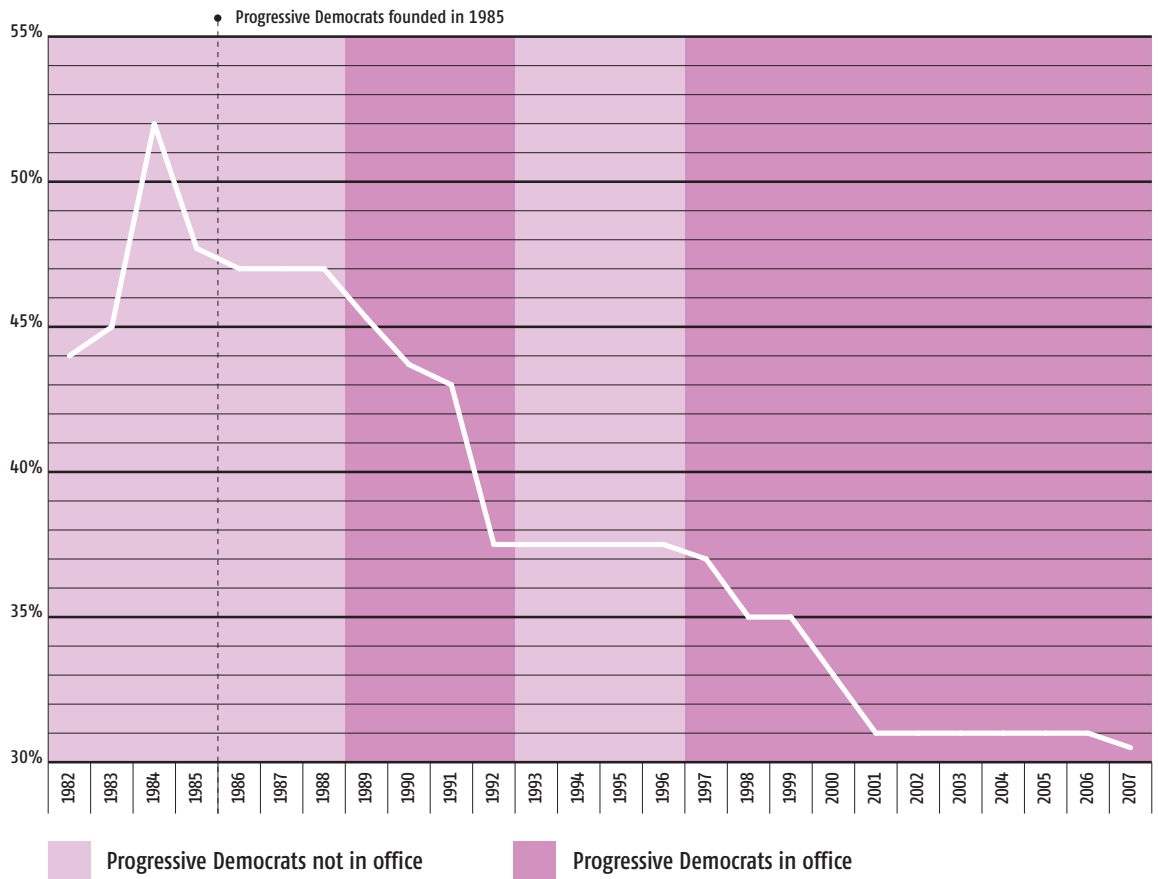
- 1 Reduce the standard rate of income tax to 18% and the higher rate of income tax to 38%.
- 2 Ensure that a couple, both earning, can earn at least up to €100,000 and a single worker can earn at least €50,000 and still only pay tax at the standard rate.
- 3 Ensure that no income tax is payable by couples earning at least up to €40,000 and single persons earning up to at least €20,000.
- 4 Ensure no new taxes or levies on employment.
- 5 Maintain the Corporation Tax rate at 12.5% and the Capital Gains Tax rate at 20%.

None of us wants to return to an era of spendthrift politics where our children's long-term future is at risk. All of our financial commitments are subject to the proviso that we maintain budgetary prudence. Our platform of financial prudence for the next term of government is composed of three elements:

- While the economy continues to grow, we will maintain budget surpluses.
- Regardless of economic circumstances, we will maintain our obligations under the European Monetary Union, ie. under the Growth and Stability Pact.
- All of our tax and spending proposals depend on budgetary prudence being maintained.



## Average income tax rate



## Q&A

**QUESTION** What will you do about large businesses that seem to raise prices at will?

**ANSWER** We will empower the Competition Authority to prosecute cases on its own initiative. The law will be changed to allow for the imposition of administrative fines by the Competition Authority where anti-competitive activity is established. We will fast-track competition cases. We will also change the law to allow the Dáil to issue a direction to any Regulator on any matter of public concern that falls within its remit.

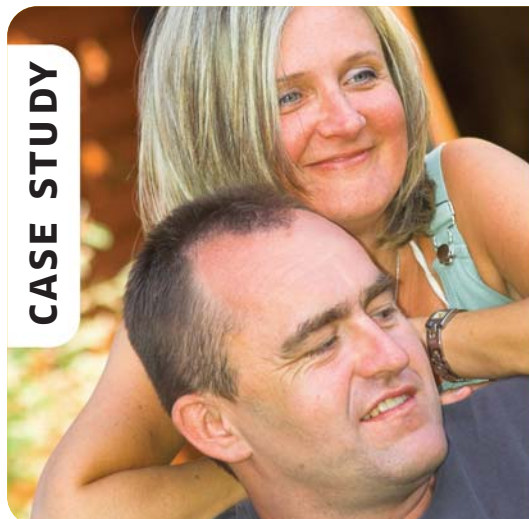
One of the Progressive Democrats core goals since our foundation in 1985 has been to reduce the tax burden on working people. At that time, in 1985, Ireland was governed by Fine Gael and Labour and the basic rate of income tax was 35% and the average rate of income tax was 47%. Since then, income tax rates have been massively reduced.

But look carefully at the pattern of tax cuts. Taking the simple average of all income tax rates, we can see that income tax rates rose steeply when Fine Gael and Labour were in government during the 1980s. They fell sharply when the PDs were in government between 1989 and 1992. Then – when Labour replaced the PDs in government during the mid-1990s – tax rates flatlined. Since 1997 – with the PDs

in government again – income tax rates have been moving in only one direction: downwards.

Today, many Parties champion the low-tax agenda. But look at the graph. Only the PDs deliver consistently on the low-tax agenda. Why would a future government without the PDs deliver on tax reform when past governments without the PDs never did?

## CASE STUDY



Ciarán is a computer technician earning €45,000 a year and Mary is a sales representative earning €35,000. On a joint income of €80,000, they currently pay €11,480 in income tax. Under our proposals, they would pay €6,400. This is a saving of €5,080 or 44%.

However, people's incomes tend to grow. If Ciarán and Mary's earnings grow by 25% over the next 5 years, then their earnings will be €100,000. Without our reforms, their tax bill would be €19,680 as against €10,000 – a saving of 49%. Furthermore, despite an additional €20,000 in earnings, they would still be paying less income tax than they will pay this year.



*"Older people today are more youthful than ever before. Better diets and better healthcare have contributed to people living longer and feeling younger than ever before."*

*"Older people have already worked hard and many have reared families. Now it is important that they can live their lives free from financial insecurity and free from worries about who will look after them should they need care as they get older. That is our goal."*



## In government, the Progressive Democrats will:

# Rewarding Pensioners

Up to recently, the system of support for people needing nursing home care was unfair, unpredictable and, in some cases, financially devastating. Mary Harney has now introduced a **Fair Deal for Nursing Home Costs** to address the problem. If returned to government, we will continue to roll out the plan.

No one will ever be asked to sell their home to secure long-term care. If a person needs full-time care in a nursing home, special rules will apply. No one will ever be asked to contribute more than four-fifths of their own, actual disposable income. A Deferred Contribution of a maximum of 5% of the value of a principal private residence (2.5% for a spouse) will be made for each year of care – up to a maximum of three years. After three years in care, no additional amount will be added.

Unlike the old system, no family members will be required to come up with cash to pay for their parent's care and, of course, there will be no means-testing of relatives. No person in care, their spouse or a dependant child, will **ever** be forced to mortgage or sell their house to pay for care.

This is one very important way in which we will show our older people the respect they are due.

### My promise to you is a simple one.

*"We will continue the unprecedented expansion of community care for older people that we have put in place since 2005, with additional home care packages, home help hours and palliative care. We will continue to give the highest levels of priority to services for older people."*



**Mary Harney TD**  
Minister for Health and Children

- 1 Increase the basic State pension to €300 per week by 2012.
- 2 Establish an Ombudsman for Older People as a statutory office to be an advocate for older people, as well as providing a dedicated service for redress. We will strongly support and implement the new Health Information and Quality Authority's role in enforcing standards in nursing homes and residential care settings.
- 3 Introduce a Special Pension Incentive Account (SPIA) where the State will contribute €1 for every €2 contributed by the individual. It will operate in lieu of other pension tax reliefs so that people investing in their pensions will be able to elect for this new scheme of benefits, or for the existing scheme of benefits in any tax year.
- 4 Expand community care for older people with additional home-care packages, home-help hours and palliative care.
- 5 Develop 500 primary care teams to improve access to services in the community, with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of holders of medical cards.
- 6 As of April 2007, the amount which people can earn before their carers allowance is reduced (income disregard) will be increased to €320 (single)/€640 (couple) per week. In government we will at least double the disregards to €640 (single)/€1,280 (couple) per week.



Michael McDowell ran into a wave of protest when he proposed the Garda Reserve. But Michael McDowell persevered with his plans for increased citizen involvement in stopping crime in

our neighbourhoods. The Garda Reserve has now been successfully established. If re-elected, we will increase the size of the reserve to 3,200 members.

## PDs 5 point-plan for combating crime:

## Tough on Crime

The public is rightly concerned about drugs and murderous gangland crime. We are taking action. Operation Anvil has targeted extra gardaí and intelligence resources on the problem.

The Criminal Assets Bureau is now targeting middle-ranking criminals in the drugs trade. Anyone convicted of possessing illegal drugs with a value of half a million euros or more will get a mandatory ten year prison sentence. A person convicted of a serious offence, who commits another serious offence within seven years, will be imprisoned for at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the maximum sentence for the second offence. These measures will effectively tackle gangland and drug-related crime.

Five years ago, public-order offences were a major focus of public concern about crime. We took action. The Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 reduced excessive drinking. Local partnerships involving gardaí, publicans and judges were set up to address the problem. And additional CCTV systems deterred misbehaviour.

And the result? While public order offences have not been eliminated, they have been significantly reduced in number since 2002.

### The safety of citizens at home and on our streets is a core concern for the Progressive Democrats.

"Significant progress has been made in the fight against crime by this government. Garda numbers have been increased to 14,000. Life sentences are now longer. We have more closed-circuit-TV (cctv) systems. We have introduced Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), and the independent Office of the Garda Ombudsman has been established."



**Michael McDowell TD**  
Party Leader  
Tánaiste and Minister for Justice,  
Equality and Law Reform

- 1 Increase garda numbers from 14,000 to 16,000.
- 2 Rebalance further the criminal law to make it fairer for victims – defendants will be required to outline their defence at the beginning of a trial. The prosecution will be able to challenge miscarriages of justice in the event of newly discovered evidence. Courts will have discretion to admit evidence obtained in good faith.
- 3 Invest in the garda – we will update PULSE and we'll computerise fingerprint and DNA records. We will invest in Garda radio, cars and protective equipment. We will increase civilian support with an extra 1,200 administrative staff plus new crime analysts.
- 4 Improve Garda efficiency – the Garda Inspectorate will improve Garda efficiency through improved deployment and operations. We will put a computerised system in place to help match Garda numbers and resources with changing circumstances on the ground.
- 5 Invest in CCTV – we will roll out more Garda CCTV systems and support community-based CCTV, especially for sheltered and senior accommodation.





## Fairer Stamp Duty

*Stamp duty is unfair. It is unfair in the way it is applied and on whom it is applied. That is why changing stamp duty completely – to make it fair – is at the heart of Progressive Democrats taxation policy in this general election. We have pledged to act on the issue of stamp duty and that is what we will do.*

If you are a first-time buyer buying a new or second-hand house – we will make sure you pay **no stamp duty. Zero.**

If you are not buying for the first time, we will drastically cut your stamp duty bill anyway by “banding” the rates. *See Q&A opposite.*

The Progressive Democrats determination to reform stamp duty, which we always envisaged to be part of the next programme for government, put the issue firmly on the political agenda and forced others to follow our lead. It is not fair on Irish families to be burdened with massive stamp duty costs when the State is taking in much more than ever anticipated.

**In the next government, the Progressive Democrats will also tackle the problems with management companies.**



We propose to strengthen the rights of homeowners and tenants, to ensure transparency, reasonableness, and fairness of service charges.

A proper legal structure for multi-unit (apartment) developments is needed, and the PDs commit to introducing this if we are part of the next government.



### CASE STUDY

Engaged couple Paul and Marian (above) are in their thirties and live and work in Kildare. “Before we met, we each bought one-bedroom apartments here in Maynooth. Now that we are getting married, we are looking to buy a home together,” states Paul. “We are very happy and quite settled in Maynooth and have found a house we like. It will cost us in the region of €600,000. That’s a lot for us, but because the apartments are worth around €300,000 each, we figured we’d be okay,” explains Marian. Paul says they couldn’t believe they faced an additional €45,000 in stamp duty to buy the €600,000 house. “I hope the PD plan is put in place because we should not have to pay about one-and-a-half times the average wage just to move in together and without increasing the net value of our property.”



*"Now that the kids are getting bigger, our starter home is getting smaller! When we went to look at a new home, we were shocked to hear we faced a whopping €38,000 in stamp duty on top of the cost of the house. We need to move and I'm sure a younger couple would find our current house ideal. Something should be done to help all of us. And soon."*



#### ABOVE

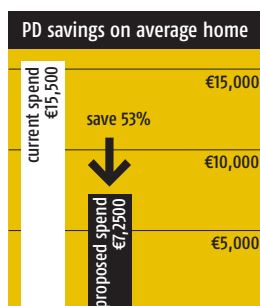
"Our place is getting a bit big for us now that the kids have moved out. We did toy with the idea of moving into a smaller second-hand house nearby costing €450,000. It was a far more manageable size and suited us down to the ground. What didn't suit us was the €33,000 stamp duty bill! Unless the PDs change the system, it's not fair to those trading up or down."

## PDs stamp duty plan

- 1 We will make stamp duty fair for first time buyers and those trading up or down.
- 2 We will abolish stamp duty for ALL first-time buyers regardless of cost, unlike other parties' proposals.
- 3 We will make stamp duty fair by "banding" rates so that owner-occupiers pay the higher rate only on the portion of the price over each threshold.
- 4 We will push to implement these changes with immediate effect in order to remove uncertainty from the market.

## CASE STUDY REPLY

It is obvious to the Progressive Democrats at least that this situation is unreasonable for Marian and Paul. Under our banding proposal, this couple could buy their new house with a stamp duty bill of just €27,855 compared to €45,000 – a massive saving of €17,145. This money would mean a great deal to a newly married couple. To help couples like Paul and Marian, and others, vote number one for your local PD candidate.



The Progressive Democrats plans will more than halve the stamp duty to be paid on an average Irish home.

If we are elected to government, we will cut this new-home tax from €15,500 to €7,250. Under our stamp duty proposals, you would save €8,250 or 53% of your bill. And this is just on a national average house price of €310,000. This money will mean a great deal to young people starting out in life who simply wish to buy a modest home to suit their needs. The Progressive Democrats were the first to propose the right solution, and one that makes a real difference.

## Q&A

### QUESTION I hear people talking about "banding" stamp duty. What exactly does that mean?

**ANSWER** A key part of our plan to make stamp duty fair for all is to make sure you pay stamp duty only on the amount above each threshold – this is called "banding". For example, there is a 7.5% stamp duty charge on houses costing €381,001 – €635,000. At the moment, if you buy a property for €430,000 your stamp duty bill is an additional €32,250 (7.5% of €430,000). The stamp duty is applied to the full €430,000. We think this is unfair. We say you should only pay the rate that applies to each of the bands and on the amount over the threshold. Under our banding proposal, your stamp duty bill for that same €430,000 home will be slashed to €15,200 – saving you €17,050.

### QUESTION Won't your plans mean massive savings for first-time buyers buying million-euro homes, and for investors?

**ANSWER** No, on both counts. Our plans are targeted at people starting out on the property ladder and, as a result, the abolition will apply only to homes less than 125 square metres, not million-euro homes or mansions. In addition, our plan applies only to the principal place of residence, and so will not provide savings for the investor market. We are determined to help families take the necessary steps as their circumstances change over the course of their lives.

*"Health is a central feature in our lives. Health is a central issue in our politics. And health is a major subject of media comment. Much of that comment centres on the competing claims of various interests who operate in the health system. The Progressive Democrats are not aligned with any particular interest within the health system. Our goal is simple. Our goal is promoting the interests of patients."*

## Better Healthcare

Health is an area with many strong and well-entrenched vested interests. But it is also a sector with thousands of dedicated professionals who want to better the lives of others, every day. The Progressive Democrats and Mary Harney recognise this. Working together, we want to drive a major health reform programme focused on guaranteeing the right of every Irish citizen to first-class treatment, irrespective of means.

Two-and-a-half years ago, Mary Harney voluntarily took on the job of Minister for Health & Children. Since then she has worked tirelessly to bring the Irish people a world-class health service, and to ensure that the €14 billion provided by Irish taxpayers this year for the health services is well spent.



**Mary Harney TD**  
Minister for Health and Children

And we are making real progress. Since 1997, the number of patients waiting for elective surgery in our hospitals has been halved.

Our work in A&E is bearing fruit. The numbers awaiting admission to A&E are down by 40% compared with a year ago.

There is much more to be done. We need to achieve practical improvements like providing for seven-day hospital discharges (Monday to Friday at present), and we need to reduce the time patients stay in hospital at least to the European average.

We're getting results. You can ensure that Mary Harney is in a position to return to the Department of Health & Children to finish the job by giving your No. 1 vote to the PDs.

### PD Guarantees to Patients:

- 1 No-one will wait more than six hours for admission at A&E.
- 2 Offer of appointment for elective hospital treatment within two months.
- 3 Patients in hospital will be discharged as soon as medically ready, seven days a week.
- 4 Recruit 1,500 additional hospital consultants.
- 5 Quality cancer care for people in every region.
- 6 Assured frequency of cancer screening calls for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer.
- 7 All children needing cardiac and cancer care procedures will be treated as soon as medically ready.
- 8 All beds in publicly-funded hospitals will be routinely available to all patients.
- 9 Standards of hygiene and infection control fully enforced.
- 10 No-one will face unaffordable nursing home care costs.
- 11 Clear standards set and enforced for nursing homes.
- 12 Assessment for services and a personal plan for persons with disabilities.





## Q&A

**QUESTION** Why is Mary Harney allowing private hospitals on public hospital lands?

**ANSWER** For many years, we have had 2,500 private beds inside public hospitals ringfenced for privately insured patients. In addition, many public beds are being used for private patients.

By getting the private sector to finance private facilities to be co-located on public hospital campuses, we will free up more than 1,000 beds in public hospitals to make them available to treat all patients. Our plans will reclaim public beds in public hospitals for public use. That's in the interest of patients.

**QUESTION** Surely we should invest in more public beds in our hospitals?

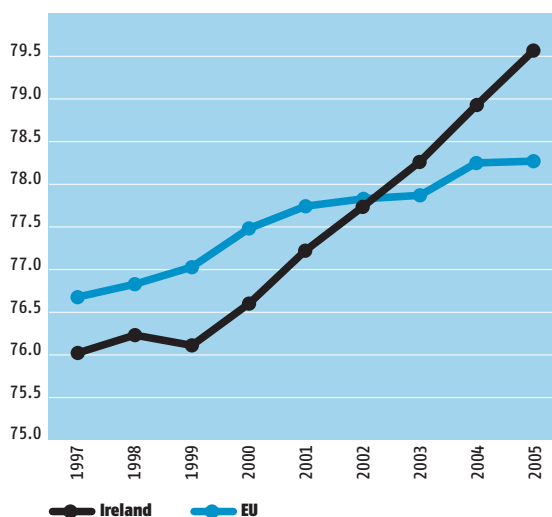
**ANSWER** Yes we should. Yes we have. And yes we will. We have added more than 1,100 new beds since 2001. We are planning an additional 400 beds through the public capital programme. And with more than 1,000 beds being freed up by our initiative above, we will be more than four-fifths of the way towards the Health Strategy 2011 goal of 3,000 new beds.



On 29 March 2004, Ireland led the way among European countries, by banning smoking in public buildings and in places of work. Despite considerable scepticism before the ban, it is clear that the ban has been a major success. Our pubs and restaurants smell cleaner and feel cleaner. Nobody is at risk from the effects of passive smoking in their workplace. And many smokers report that they are smoking fewer cigarettes than before.

Since 2004, many other European countries have followed Ireland's lead. Smoking bans have been announced in England, France, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Sweden and Wales.

### Life expectancy in years



Source: World Health Organisation (January 2007)

Much public comment about our health system is negative. But – judging by the most important health statistic – our health has never been better. Our life expectancy has been rising steadily over the past decade. In 2003, average life expectancy in Ireland overtook the EU average for the first time and it is now approaching 80 years of age.

### CASE STUDY

Following a two-year wait at Tallaght Hospital, Mary from Blanchardstown, had her tonsils removed in a private hospital, in March 2006. "I would be sick every couple of weeks with my tonsils and off school a lot. I would have a high temperature, find it uncomfortable to eat and have a sore throat." Mary was added to the Patient Treatment Register in October 2005 and, because she was over three months waiting for her operation, the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) wrote to her to offer her quicker treatment. "The operation was quick. I only had to stay one night and rest for a couple of days afterwards. I now feel so much better and haven't been sick since."

*"There is no point in developing a successful Ireland at the expense of our natural environment. The PDs won't let that happen. Your prosperity and environmental protection can go hand-in-hand. Doing the right thing for future generations does not mean putting on the brakes. It means managing our economic success to provide the resources needed to be world leaders in environmental protection."*

## Protecting Our Environment

*Climate change is the greatest environmental problem facing us and our future generations. Poor economies cause much greater environmental damage than stronger economies. Those who argue that we must reduce economic growth for the sake of the environment are wrong.*

We believe that only a high-performance economy will generate the resources to successfully address the question of environmental sustainability. The right political leadership – PD leadership – can deliver continued economic success AND achieve world-best standards in terms of emissions control, biofuel production and use, and energy conservation.

At the heart of the Progressive Democrats approach is the commitment to establish a separate **Department of Environment and Energy** to drive a national programme across government. This will ensure Ireland reduces its pollution and emissions in line with our international obligations, secures energy supply and promotes maximum use of sustainable energy sources.

The PDs will ensure that our Kyoto target for 2012 is fully met, and that we are in a position to contribute fully to meeting the EU target of at least a 20% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels by 2020. This will mean:

- Ensuring that 30% of electricity is generated from renewable sources by 2015, and 33% by 2020.
- Maximising the development, production and use of biomass and biofuels.
- Promoting efficient energy use and energy conservation across the economy.
- Making Ireland a world leader in terms of the development and use of renewable energy technologies.
- Establishing an independent Commission for Sustainable Development.

### Progressive Democrats proposals to protect the environment

- 1 Raise the energy efficiency of all new homes and commercial buildings.
- 2 Introduce "hands-off" zoning by local authorities for all sports, recreational and education-related lands to protect our urban "green lungs".
- 3 Phase out inefficient, incandescent light bulbs.
- 4 Ensure peat-fired electricity stations use 30% renewable material by 2015.
- 5 Use every appropriate tax, excise relief and financial incentive to make Ireland a world leader in renewable energy crop production and use.
- 6 Invest €13 billion promoting a switch from private to public transport.
- 7 Ensure petrol and diesel have on average a 5.75% biofuel mix by 2009.
- 8 Ensure all new buses in the public fleet use a biofuel blend of at least 30%.
- 9 Replace the car tax system with one based on fuel efficiency.
- 10 Establish a National Waste Management Agency and a dedicated Water and Sewerage Services Office in the EPA.





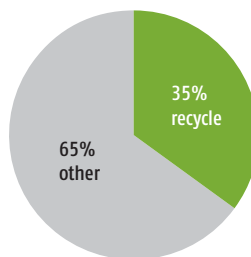
## Supporting Rural Life

*“Thankfully, people in rural Ireland nowadays have the choice to work off-farm if they wish. But for those who do want to farm for a living, we must do everything we can to ensure they are able to do so. The PDs will do what it takes.”*

The PDs proposals include:

- Support the right of rural dwellers to build in their local area.
- Support agricultural education and training.
- Fund measures to attract young and trained people into farming.
- Invest in measures to facilitate the voluntary early retirement of older farmers and farm workers to create opportunities for younger farmers.
- Ensure that adequate establishment grants are paid to farmers to plant willow and elephant grass to make certain that sufficient biomass becomes available.
- Start a new Anti-Social Isolation Scheme “ONE-2-ONE”, a community-based scheme in which neighbours will become the outside link with the world for people who might otherwise be isolated geographically or socially.
- Invest €90 million in rural transport schemes.
- Reduce the administrative burden faced by farmers by applying a “one-stop-shop” concept to Departmental inspections.
- Continue to fully protect the live export trade, which offers competition in the marketplace for Irish farmers.

### Recycling rates



### Did you know?

Ireland hit its national recycling rate target of 35% in 2006 – an amazing 7 years ahead of the 2013 target date. When we set the target in 1998, we were recycling less than 10% of municipal waste.

We know we can do more, and the Progressive Democrats are the Party with the know-how.

In the next government, we will oblige all large supermarket and retail chains to set aside space in their stores to allow customers to dispose of packaging before they leave the store.

### CASE STUDY

Paul is a fitter with Banagher Concrete in Co. Offaly and he hopes necessary action on the environment will be taken without threatening everything we have achieved. “Nothing is worth risking Ireland’s environment but the government must get the balance right. Fifteen years ago, lads my age were emigrating to find work. Now I’m one of 250 people employed here in Offaly, prefabricating motorways and other major infrastructural projects. I don’t think it would just be my job at risk if we called a halt to roads projects or the other important factors in our economic success. It could be jobs in all sectors of the economy. I say ‘yes’ to the environment, but ‘yes’ to economic progress too. I’ll be giving my vote to the party that will put neither of these at risk, not to a party with a narrow focus that could do more harm than good.”



"Ireland's amazing economic transformation has meant a 17% increase in the population of our country over the past ten years – now over 4.2 million people. By 2021 our population may well exceed 5 million people.

Ireland is moving from a low base towards world-class transport system provision. The PDs have the right plans to meet the incredible demands on our transport infrastructure."



## Transport and Infrastructure

The Progressive Democrats in government over the past decade put in place policies to deliver increasing prosperity to the people through economic growth. We need better transport infrastructure to serve our existing needs and to facilitate further growth.

That means more rail, more and better roads, more buses and more 'park and ride' facilities. We are committed to **every** necessary measure to keep Ireland moving and to keep Ireland prosperous. All of this must happen in an environment of increasing safety and sustainability.

The Progressive Democrats believe we must end not only Ireland's infrastructure deficit, but create a platform for balanced regional growth throughout the island and a better quality of life for everyone. In particular, we are concerned that the regions should not fall behind. Quality living requires the highest standards of infrastructure across the State, with feasible measures to provide some counter-balance to the expanding Greater Dublin area.

### Progressive Democrats proposals to develop Ireland's transport systems:

- 1 Fully implement Transport 21 and the new National Development Plan (2007-2013).
- 2 Introduce additional buses, new bus priority measures and new 'park and ride' sites.
- 3 Introduce a fully integrated, customer-friendly smart card ticketing system in the Greater Dublin area.
- 4 Invest €90 million in rural transport schemes.
- 5 Implement our *Access All Stations* policy for rail users.
- 6 Build more infrastructure to allow safer commuting by bicycle and on foot.
- 7 Complete a European-standard motorway and road system.
- 8 Build a new outer orbital route around Dublin linking the M7, M4, M3, M2 and M1.
- 9 Develop METRO North and West in Dublin.
- 10 Build the Atlantic Corridor rail and road links.
- 11 Enhance and extend LUAS to Cherrywood, Lucan and Citywest.
- 12 Build a new light rail system in Cork.
- 13 Progress commuter rail for Limerick, and LASER (Limerick And Shannon Express Rail) project.
- 14 Extend overall capacity at Dublin Airport to cater for 30 million passengers.
- 15 Ensure the independence of Cork and Shannon airports.
- 16 Make road safety training a mandatory element of the school curriculum.
- 17 Advance the Cork Docklands development.
- 18 Create a major international air-sea freight hub on the Shannon estuary.

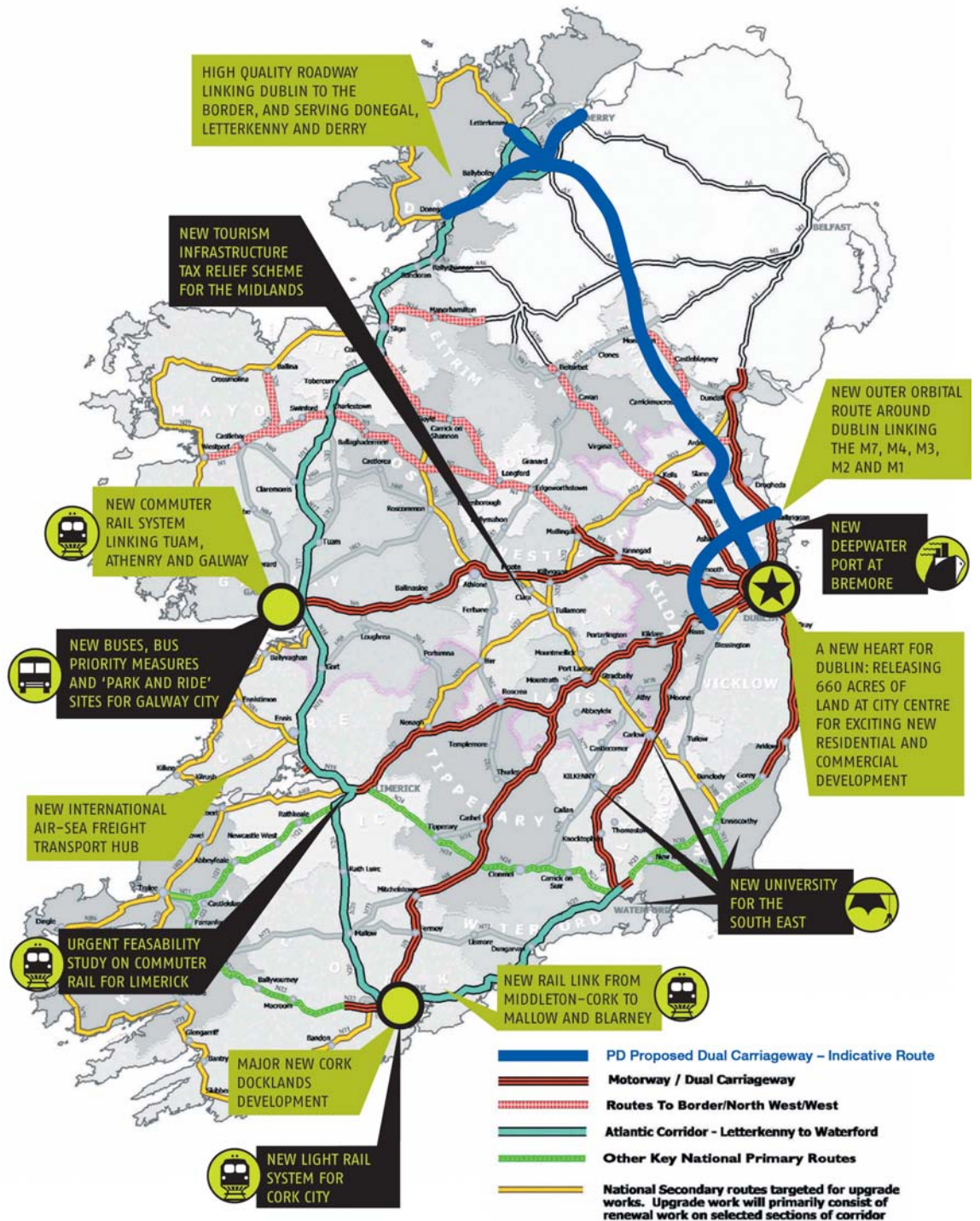


## PDs Infrastructure Blueprint



### Not just efficient travel, SAFE travel

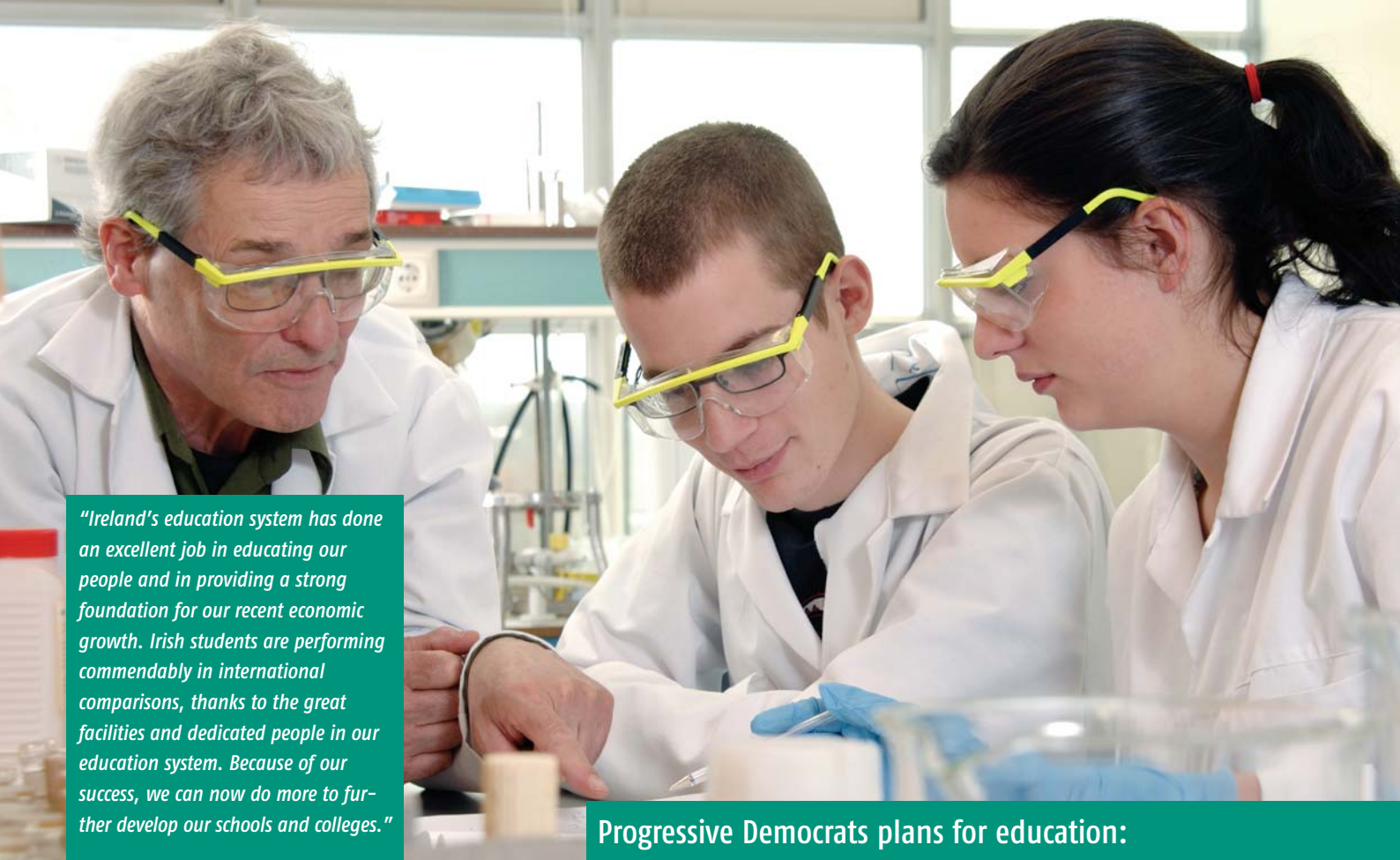
The number of fatalities and injuries on our roads is one of the single greatest areas of concern for the Progressive Democrats. In our manifesto, we detail our plans to work with and support the Road Safety Authority to prioritise road safety measures across all relevant government departments and agencies, with actions to be taken in four specific areas: education, enforcement, engineering and evaluation. Please see our full manifesto for more information.



**A New Heart for Dublin.** We plan to relocate the industrial activities of Dublin Port to Bremore in north Co. Dublin, and to redevelop the port site for a high quality mixed use development of

cultural, commercial and housing, as well as a port for cruise and passenger ferries – creating A New Heart for Dublin. ([www.newheartfordublin.ie](http://www.newheartfordublin.ie)).





*"Ireland's education system has done an excellent job in educating our people and in providing a strong foundation for our recent economic growth. Irish students are performing commendably in international comparisons, thanks to the great facilities and dedicated people in our education system. Because of our success, we can now do more to further develop our schools and colleges."*

## Educating for Success

*The Progressive Democrats will make sure communities have modern and well-staffed schools.*

We will strengthen the management capabilities of schools and promote the strongest child-protection measures. It is our intention to prioritise schools in areas of disadvantage, students with special needs, and promote the successful integration of foreign students. In conjunction with all of this, we will invest €2 billion to ensure greater equity of access to higher education, provide massively increased resources to third-level institutions, double the output of fourth-level graduates, and encourage greater commercialisation of academic research.

**We are proud of progress to date on promoting equality in Irish society, but know that this work is never finished.** If we are part of the next government, we will continue to promote gender equality, and vigorously pursue policies that tackle negative attitudes and actions regarding ageing and disability. We will support and fund initiatives under the National Women's Strategy, continue to provide funding to tackle the problem of domestic violence and "equality proof" government policy.

### Progressive Democrats plans for education:

- 1 Invest over €5 billion in schools infrastructure, schools development, and information and communications technology.
- 2 Introduce strict enforceable conditions in planning permission to guarantee that large new developments must include school facilities.
- 3 Reform the teacher allocation system to reflect both current and projected pupil numbers in order to reduce class sizes.
- 4 Pursue a target of 25 children maximum per class in national schools.
- 5 Increasing the capitation paid to all primary schools, including Gaelscoileanna and Educate Together, to the levels paid to secondary schools.
- 6 Introduce a formal framework of support, training and assistance for school boards of management.
- 7 Focus investment on speeding up the assessment and resource allocation elements of the special needs process. Evaluate possible role for the National Treatment Purchase Fund.
- 8 Evaluate available approaches to address special needs to ensure Irish schools promote methods that best suit the child and reflect best international research and practice.
- 9 Reform the out-of-date and inadequate school bus transport catchment area structure.
- 10 Provide 600 additional teachers for language support in the education sector by 2009.
- 11 Make grinds and revision materials available free of charge on the Internet for all subjects on the Leaving Certificate syllabus.
- 12 Support a university for the south east with campuses at Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny and Carlow.
- 13 Undertake a root-and-branch review of the third-level grants system to ensure a fair, unified and simplified system.



"In 2007, over €216m is being provided for arts and cultural projects in Ireland. The Progressive Democrats have delivered unprecedented levels of funding and support for arts, culture and the Irish language. If we are returned to government, we will continue to show how much we cherish our unique culture by building on our achievements. It's not just about preservation, it's about pride."



## Cherishing our Culture and Language



Creideann muid go bhfuil tábhacht ar leith ag an nGaeilge do mhuintir, do shochaí agus do chultúr na hÉireann. Tacaíonn muid go láidir le Ráiteas i Leith na Gaeilge 2006 a foilsíodh le gairid.

Tá an Ghaeilge sainiúil don tír seo mar theanga labhartha pobail agus dá bhrí sin tá sí rithábachtach d'fhéiniúlacht mhuintir na hÉireann agus don oidhreacht dhomhanda.

*The Progressive Democrats know how special and important Ireland's cultural heritage is to our people. Indeed, these distinctive qualities are recognised all over the globe.*

We are determined to do even more to support capital infrastructure for our national cultural institutions and to develop the private sector cultural industry with financial support. We have, and will continue to fund projects that improve the cultural infrastructure in Ireland.

Most of us don't realise it, but almost 1.6 million people in the Republic of Ireland can speak Irish. Perhaps as importantly, 92% of people surveyed feel that promoting the Irish language is important to the country, to themselves personally, or to both. The Progressive Democrats firmly share that view. Over the past decade, we have proven and affirmed our support for the development and preservation of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht.

We fully support the recently published *Statement On The Irish Language 2006*. As a spoken community language, Irish is unique to this country and is, therefore, of crucial importance to the identity of the Irish people and to world heritage.

### PD plans for arts, culture and the Irish language:

- 1 Invest over €1 billion in Ireland's cultural infrastructure and the Irish language.
- 2 Provide the widest possible range of services to parents who wish to raise their children through Irish.
- 3 Continue to develop high-quality broadcast services through Irish.
- 4 Provide special support for the Gaeltacht as an Irish-speaking area.
- 5 Further develop all-Irish secondary education.
- 6 Ensure that the National Collections are housed and displayed in modern facilities.
- 7 Support positive educational and outreach cultural programmes.
- 8 Fund a new National Concert Hall and a new National Theatre.
- 9 Develop cultural facilities across the country, by exploiting the potential for sharing by Dublin-based institutions of national resources.

# Our Candidates



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## What have the PDs ever done for me?

Policies championed and delivered by the Party in government include:

→ Cutting the Standard Income Tax rate from 26% to 20% and the Top Tax rate from 48% to 41%.

→ Over one third of workforce now out of the tax net completely.

→ Low taxes have unleashed enterprise, resulting in virtual full employment and an end to enforced emigration.

→ Top 1% of income earners now pay 20% of the total Income Tax bill.

→ National Minimum Wage established by Mary Harney.

→ Old Age Pension increased above €200 per week.

→ National Treatment Purchase Fund established for everyone waiting over 3 months for elective operations; over 50,000 people treated to date.

→ Personal Injuries Assessment Board established, and insurance premiums cut by 45% as a result.

→ Established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

→ Garda numbers increased to 14,000; Garda Reserve established, and ASBOs introduced to combat vandalism.

→ Criminal Law updated to ensure repeat offenders will now face heavy additional sentences.

→ Mary Harney was country's first Minister for Environmental Protection and banished Dublin's killer smog; other cities later followed suit.

→ First hospital hygiene audits to combat MRSA.

→ 50% increase in health services staff since 1997.

→ Biggest increase in Medical Card eligibility limit in 30 years.

→ Taxi market freed up; taxi numbers now up more than five-fold.

→ Insisted on the full delivery of the Good Friday Agreement, and stood firm in the face of IRA refusal to decommission weapons and to abandon crime.



# Don't throw it all away!



For more information, to join us, to get on the e-mail list or to contact a candidate please call (01) 679 4399.

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Full manifesto available at  
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