



TITHE AN OIREACHTAIS

**An Comhchoiste um Airgeadas, Caiteachas Poiblí agus
Athchóiriú**

**Tuarascáil maidir le hAighneachtaí Réamhbhuiséid
2015**

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HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS

**Joint Committee on Finance Public Expenditure and
Reform**

Report on 2015 Pre-budget Submissions

August 2014

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1. Submissions to the Joint Committee can be accessed on the Oireachtas web site:-

http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/committees_list/fper-committee/2015pre-budgetsubmissions/

2. Transcripts of the public hearings can be accessed at Oireachtas web site:-

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committees/FIJ2014071500001?opendocument>

and

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committees/FIJ2014071600001?opendocument>

and

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committees/FIJ2014071700001?opendocument>



CHAIRMAN'S PREFACE.

In line with previous practice, the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform agreed to seek the views of interested individuals and organisations in advance of the publication of Budget 2015, with a view to adding value to the process and informing public debate.

In that context, the Committee advertised on the Oireachtas website for written submissions from interested individuals and organisations. In the interests of efficiency and maximising benefit, the Committee stipulated that all submissions should include a two page summary and endeavour to outline how the costs of the proposed increases in expenditure or tax reductions can be met.

Given the time constraints involved, and the large number of submissions received, the Joint Committee agreed to review the contents of the submissions and prepare an overview of these. Furthermore, the Committee agreed to publish a report incorporating the overview of submissions received and to forward the report to the Minister for Finance for his attention.

In addition, the Committee held public hearings in the form of five roundtable discussions based on the following key themes: *Economy & Taxation; Social Protection; Environment & Housing; Health* and *Agriculture & Transport*. A diverse range of organisations that made submissions were invited to come before the Committee and engage in these discussions.

The hearings and submissions made by those attending highlighted the choices and constraints faced in advance of budget 2015.

I would like to thank the individuals and organisations who made submissions to the Committee. I would also like to thank the organisations who came before the Committee and shared their knowledge and expertise.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Members of the Joint Committee, and the Committee Secretariat Staff for their commitment and dedication.

I hope this work will assist and help the Minister and Government frame Budget 2015.



Ciaran Lynch T.D.

Chairman

August 2014

1. INTRODUCTION.

The Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform has sought pre budget submissions for a number of years and considers this an important exercise in public engagement and assisting the budget process. The individual submissions received will be made available on the Oireachtas web site.

This year, the Committee sought to maximise the benefits of this experience by asking for short summaries of submissions that highlighted key issues and recommendations. In addition, where submissions proposed increases in expenditure or reductions in tax, contributors were asked to suggest, at a minimum even in terms of general principle, ways in which the cost of their proposals could be met.

The Joint Committee reviewed the contents of the submissions and prepared a brief summary of the key issues raised in each submission. In addition, the Joint Committee held public hearings based on five key themes: *Economy & Taxation; Social Protection; Environment & Housing; Health and Agriculture & Transport*. The hearings were held on 15th, 16th and 17th July 2014.

The Joint Committee, in publishing this report is not making any recommendations. Rather, in recognition of how pre-budget submissions can add value to both the budgetary process and public debate, the Joint Committee considered that the best approach was to publish, in this report, a very brief overview of the key issues contained in the submissions received and forward the report to the Minister for Finance in advance of Budget 2014.

The Joint Committee wishes to express thanks to all those who participated in this process and value the opportunity afforded to engage with interested parties.

2. OVERVIEW OF SUBMISSIONS

ORGANISATIONS.

Submission 1: Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Ireland

The submission contains 4 key recommendations:

1. Provide brain injury specific policy and programme funding;
2. Provide Case Management Services;
3. Implement the Neuro-Rehabilitation Strategy 2011/15; and
4. Develop Education and Awareness Strategies

Submission 2: Alzheimer Society of Ireland

The submission contains an Introduction and opening summary on a document entitled '*Supporting Care in the Community: Living at Home as a First Option*'.

The submission details a number of Proposals regarding

- Political Leadership;
- Government Actions;
- Potential Cost Savings; and
- Budget 2015 and wider Government Policy.

Submission 3: Amnesty International

A summary of the submission contains ten recommendations that are all concerned with Human Rights and the provision of State Services to ensure these rights are respected and enshrined in law. Amnesty International urges that measures introduced in Budget 2015 support the principle of human rights for all citizens.

The Submission further builds on the recommendations contained in the Summary.

Submission 4: Ash Ireland

The Submission contains four specific proposals:

1. Increase tobacco price;
2. Abolish VAT on nicotine replacement patches;
3. Impose a 50 cents litter levy on tobacco packs; and
4. Make further investments to tackle tobacco smuggling.

Figures are provided to show the savings that can be made and where additional increases in revenue can be used to fund areas such as tackling tobacco smuggling. It outlines 'trade offs' where expenditure is offset by potential savings. It gives examples of other countries who have initiated robust campaigns to reduce national smoking levels, such as New Zealand, Spain and the UK.

Submission 5: Blackwater Motors and Audi Cork

The submission focuses on the reform of Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) and Road Tax. It contains 4 key recommendations:

1. Reduce the VRT rate. The submission contends that the increases in VRT have significantly affected car sales (new car sales in particular) leading to job losses and business closures and has diminished the ability of Irish people to buy cars.
2. Road tax should be brought in line with other EU countries.
3. Allow reregistration of a used car in the county of residence for a small fee.
4. Introduce a system where any used car imports from the UK require a history check and proof that VAT has been paid prior to registration.

The Submission is supported by a commissioned study from UCC Economists regarding the price elasticity of the car market.

Submission 6: Chambers Ireland

The submission focuses on 2 key areas:

1. Jobs and Tax:

The submission contains, inter alia, the following key proposals:

- Retain existing corporation tax and tourism sector tax rates;
- Reduce marginal tax rates;
- Reform enterprise & investment incentives;
- examine Seed Capital Scheme issues.

2. Local Authority Issues: Incentivising and Encouraging Development and Construction

The submission contains, inter alia, the following key proposals:

- Introduce measures to make infrastructure and planning contribute to growth;
- Reduce VAT on residential property construction;
- Implement effective Local Authority reforms,
- Examine Government procurement policy so that Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)s are not prohibited from applying for contracts and less contracts are awarded to companies operating outside the country.

Submission 7: Drinks Industry Group of Ireland (DIGI)

The submission contains an Executive Summary proposing to reverse the excise increase in the 2014 budget and an analysis of the proposition that excise is a tax on jobs; tourism and consumers.

The key recommendation is the proposal to reverse the excise increase as a means of reversing job losses and business closures in the pub and restaurant trade, in particular.

The submission outlines the effects on jobs, tourism and consumers and uses supporting figures from a variety of sources, specifically the Central Statistics Office (CSO), Revenue Commissioners and Department of Finance.

Submission 8: European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)

The submission contains a one page summary of proposals provided. The proposals represent the views of many organisations that provide social supports and services both operationally and at policy level. The submission expands on the proposals and contains detailed analysis which is supported by evidence based research.

Key proposals, inter alia, are:

- Budget 2015 and subsequent budgets should be equality and poverty proofed with Government Departments mandated to measure the impact of specific budgetary measures on those most at risk of poverty;
- Implement measures to protect workers in casual employment such as putting stronger regulations in place regarding the zero hours contract; and
- Establish a single set of rules for social welfare recipients who work part time that takes into account different patterns of employment.

Submission 9: Fighting Blindness

The Submission contains six recommendations:

1. Invest more in medical research regarding eye conditions that cause blindness;
2. Invest in patient registries;
3. Provide sustained funding to protect counselling services;
4. Provide needs based services in rural areas;
5. Ensure the early adoption of the National Vision Strategy and implementation of Irish Plan for Rare Diseases. The submission gives an estimate of the aggregate cost to the State of vision impairment and an estimate of savings that could be achieved from cost interventions.

Submission 10: Focus Ireland

The submission contains four key recommendations:

1. Increase Housing Supply;
2. Provide significant capital investment in social housing;
3. Provide adequate social protection measures, specifically Rent Allowance/Supplement rates should reflect market rents; and
4. Protect homeless services.

The submission contains detailed financial estimates regarding the provision of investment in social housing and other measures.

Submission 11: Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)

The submission contains, inter alia, the following key recommendations:

- Introduce a Social Protection Floor;
- Budgetary Measures should be poverty proofed;
- Budgetary Measures should be Human Rights proofed;
- Social welfare and pensions legislation should be published to give time for debate and with sufficient explanation;
- Training should be compulsory for all Social Protection front-line staff, but particularly for Deciding Officers;
- The Social Welfare Appeals Office should establish a database of decisions; and
- A minimum income level should apply below which a person's social welfare payment cannot go in cases where monies are being recovered due to overpayment.

Submission 12: Glohealth Financial Services Limited

The submission examines the following key issues:

- Consequences of charging private patients in public hospitals;
- Capping tax relief at Source for health insurance; and
- The effects of the Health Insurance Levy.

It recommends considering 3 measures in budget 2015:

1. Reduce the Health Insurance Levy.
2. Increase the cap on tax relief at source for health insurance premiums by 20% of premium up to a maximum of €1200.
3. Ensure there are no further increases in costs to private patients in public hospitals and initiate a benchmarking exercise to compare costs between public and private hospitals.

Submission 13: Hardware Association of Ireland

The submission contains six key recommendations:

1. Introduce a Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme;
2. Introduce a voucher system for Winter Fuel Allowance;
3. Introduce a Help-To-Buy and Build measure;
4. Develop an Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme;
5. Expand the Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme and
6. Incentivise Jobseekers to take Seasonal Jobs.

Submission 14: Home and Community Care Ireland (HCCI)

The submission contains six key recommendations:

1. Amalgamate budgets for care of older people;
2. Establish more open and transparent commissioning of home care services;
3. Reform social welfare regulations to incentivise people to work in the sector;
4. Safeguard jobs and maintain homecare as an affordable option for all including those in need of 24/7 care;
5. Double the €50,000 ceiling for tax relief; and
6. Extend the IT47 definition of incapacitation to include home care requirements caused by old age or infirmity.

Submission 15: Ibec

The submission contains five key proposals:

1. Reduce the fiscal adjustment to less than €1 billion;
2. Cut personal taxes;
3. Enhance investment in enterprise and infrastructure;
4. Improve Ireland's international tax offering; and
5. Reduce consumer taxes.

The Submission Expands on the recommendations with highly detailed economic and financial analysis.

Submission 16: Institute Of Directors

The submission contains 7 key recommendations:

1. Reduce income tax;
2. Support the SME sector;
3. Encourage Irish investment;
4. Reform the public sector;
5. Address long term unemployment issues;
6. Address private health insurance issues; and
7. Maintain spend on education and health.

The Submission expands upon the recommendations with detailed analysis and the results of a Survey of Irish Directors.

Specific Proposals regarding the SME Sector are outlined in the submission

Submission 17: Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers (IPAV)

The submission contains a background context to the housing market and proposes 8 Measures to regain demand/supply equilibrium:

1. Mortgage Insurance Proposal;
2. Vacant Land Levy in Inner City Dublin;
3. Rent-a-Room Scheme expansion proposals;
4. Increase NAMA Property Sales;
5. Proposed treatment of investors by Banks;
6. Ways to deal with planning process issues that cause delays;
7. Ways to restrict the informal economy in the Construction Sector; and
8. The establishment of a Property Council.

Submission 18: Institute of Guidance Counsellors

The submission refers to a number of key issues of concern:

- Inequality in service provision by Guidance Counsellors;
- Reductions in their professional service availability due to cutbacks; and
- Severe pressure and lack of access to supervision oversight.

Submission 19: Irish Cancer Society

This is a joint submission with the Irish Heart Foundation regarding tobacco use and control.

The submission outlines four key recommendations:

1. Adjust structure of tobacco taxation;
2. Impose a 50% tax increase on tobacco products as part of a tobacco tax escalator;
3. Use tax to make the price of 'roll your own' tobacco and cigarettes comparable; and
4. Ring-Fence 20% of excise duties for smoking cessation services.

The Fiscal Measures are supported by strong evidence based research studies.

Submission 20: Irish Creamery & Milk Suppliers Association

The submission is in 5 Sections with a series of proposals relating to:

- Business of farming and income tax;
- Land policy and taxation to support Irish agriculture;
- Farm investment tax incentives;
- Funding farm schemes; and
- Indirect Taxation measures to support agriculture.

Submission 21: Irish Farmers Association (IFA)

The document was prepared as a submission for the Agri-Taxation Review. It contains a one page summary and overview . The key objectives outlined in the Review are:

- maintain valuable tax reliefs relating to the sector;
- Secure new tax incentives to incentivise transfer, mobility and investment;
- Ascertain how the tax system can accommodate inconsistent incomes; and
- Simplify tax returns.

It provides detailed analysis regarding Income Tax; Farm Transfers, Succession and Land Mobility; Tax Relief for Partnerships; Sector Specific Proposals; Tax Simplification for SME's.

Submission 22: Irish Heart Foundation

The submission outlines 3 key recommendations:

1. Introduce a tax on Sugar Sweetened Drinks (SSD)s;
2. Provide €20 million subsidy system for fruit and vegetable purchases for those on low incomes;
3. Provide €10 million for a Children's Future Health Fund.

Submission 23: Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)

The main proposal outlined in the submission is that the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme Budget should be increased to €50 million.

The submission also contains a detailed analysis of current poverty trends.

Submission 24: Irish Medical Organisation (IMO)

The submission contains a series of recommendations under 2 key headings.

Health Service Funding.

1. Commission a report on the effects of budget and manpower cuts in acute care;
2. Increase financial and manpower resources sufficiently to ensure the safe provision of hospital services;
3. Prepare a detailed Implementation Plan for the delivery of GP care which is free at point of access;
4. Provide adequate resources for GP management of chronic diseases;
5. Provide funding for primary care infrastructure and services; and
6. Abolish prescription charges for medical card holders and begin reducing the levels of all out of pocket payments incrementally.

Taxing for Health Promotion

1. The Government should proceed with Minimum Unit Pricing of alcohol and impose a levy on the drinks industry relating to the costs of treating alcohol related harm.
2. Cigarettes should be increased by at least €1.00 per packet and all other tobacco products should be increased on a pro-rata basis.
3. Introduce a Tobacco Levy and ring fence the revenue raised for health promotion and tobacco control initiatives; and
4. Introduce a pricing structure to discourage consumption of foods with high sugar, high fat and high salt contents and encourage consumption of healthier food and drink.

Submission 25: Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA)

Two page Summary contains one key recommendation asking for Current Commercial Vehicle Road Tax (VRT) Regime to be revised.

In this context, it makes two proposals:

1. Introduce a 'pay as you go system' where truck drivers pay, for instance, a €10 daily rate only when the truck is in use;
2. Review VRT rates paid by other commercial vehicles with a view to balancing out the rates paid by different sectors so that road hauliers are not disproportionately taxed.

It contends that the road haulage industry will be forced to relocate abroad if the current prohibitive tax rates continue to apply. This will result in the closure of many SME's and job losses as there are 5,000 business operating in this country at present.

Submission 26: Kilmihil People's Park Limited

This is a one page submission. It makes a proposal regarding the provision of a tax incentive to rejuvenate derelict buildings in the hearts of towns, villages and cities nationwide. The proposal states that where a person owns a building but is heavily indebted, they should be incentivised to partner with an investor to develop the building for sale or rental purposes. The building owner would receive an income or pension and the investor would have an investment opportunity.

It doesn't include financial estimates or costs but rather suggests how the measure could be implemented and gives the local example of Kilmihil People's Park Limited.

Submission 27: Mental Health Reform

The submission contains nine key recommendations:

1. Allocation of an additional €50 million for community mental health services in Budget 2015, including innovation funding to assist the recovery ethos and employ Peer Support Workers and funding for homeless people;
2. Ensure the 2014 allocation is spent this year on service improvements;
3. Ensure the Mental Health Commission is adequately staffed;
4. Extend primary care service to all people who require long term mental health treatment;
5. Extend primary care counselling;
6. Fund the roll-out of Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurses;
7. Fund a pilot of the Individual Placement and Support Model of supported employment;
8. Provide funding for an additional 40 individuals to move from HSE accommodation to mainstream housing; and
9. Provide funding for social support for individuals with a mental health difficulty to access and maintain accommodation.

The Submission expands on the proposals and includes personal case studies.

Submission 28: National Off Licence Association (NAFFLA)

The submission makes 2 key recommendations:

1. Reverse consecutive excise duty increases on alcohol; and
2. Reintroduce the ban on 'Below Cost Selling' of alcohol products.

The submission contains industry survey results. It makes the point that independent Off Licence Retailers contribute positively in local communities through job creation and local initiatives to enhance the local area. They also act responsibly in the manner in which they sell alcohol. The submission contends that they cannot compete with large multiples who sell a wide variety of goods and can afford alcohol loss leaders where the losses are recouped by the profits on other goods. In addition, it states that cheap alcohol encourages irresponsible consumption.

Submission 29: National Newspapers Ireland

The submission states that the future sustainability of the newspaper industry is important for this country both from an economic and social perspective.

It makes one key recommendation:

The 9% VAT rate for print media should be retained to secure the future of the newspaper industry and the VAT rate for digital media should be reduced from 23% to 9% so that both digital and print media are treated equitably.

The submission contains financial analysis with figures relating to national readership levels to support its recommendation. Specifically it refers to the impact on sales; jobs and local shops and alludes to the effects on local democracy and education if the newspaper industry is forced to contract.

Submission 30: National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)

The submission makes 5 key recommendations:

1. Youth Work Services should be protected primarily by maintaining Youth Work Funding at current levels.
2. Supports should be provided for disadvantaged young job seekers by establishing an Innovation Fund within the Youth Guarantee Scheme to support initiatives by the youth work sector that address the needs of long term unemployed job seekers.

3. Education, training and work for young job seekers should be incentivised by restoring the unemployment assistance rate of €188 to all young job seekers who are participating in education, training and work experience.
4. Alcohol related harm should be tackled by introducing a 1.5% social responsibility levy on drinks manufacturers to generate funds to replace the sponsorship of large sporting events by the drinks industry.
5. Child Poverty should be reduced by increasing adult social welfare rates in line with the rising cost of living and maintaining Child Benefit rates at the current level.

Submission 31: One Family

The submission contains three proposals:

1. Increase revenue provided to one parent families;
2. Address the issue of housing provision; and
3. Tailor income support to reflect the specific needs of single parent households.

The submission contains one key recommendation:

- A Shared Child Support Credit should be introduced to replace the Single Person Child Carer Tax Credit (SPCCTC). The SPCCTC replaced the One Parent Family Tax Credit (OPFTC). The submission makes specific reference to the financial impact this has had on parents who are secondary care givers and can no longer claim the tax credit. The new credit would require parents to submit a signed document outlining their shared parenting arrangements, maintenance payments and other key aspects relating to the care of the child(ren).

Submission 32: Property Industry Ireland

The submission contains three key recommendations with a number of recommendations under each.

1. Prioritise funding of Ireland's social needs.

- Prioritise construction of 5,500 new social housing units by ring-fencing income from selling surplus state property and investing in housing schemes;
- Harness private institutional and charitable investment;
- Centralise and make property management more professional;
- Reform and improve Part V;
- Mandate developers to engage with planners at pre-planning stage and require planning decisions to be made within six weeks.

2. Accelerate delivery of high quality, sustainable private residential property.

- Reduce non construction costs of property;
- Reform building standards and planning policy;
- Implement the actions in Construction 2020; and
- Convert unused retail units to residential use.

3. Promote investment in commercial property and speed up delivery of critical public infrastructure.

- Support IDA Ireland pre-lettings of appropriate commercial premises;
- Target exchequer capital where it will create the most jobs;
- Make Building Information Modelling (BIM) compulsory; and
- Reform Government procurement to provide more information on life cycle costing and criteria used for awarding contracts.

Submission 33: Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI)

The submission contains recommendations regarding:

Alcohol

- Introduce a Minimum Unit Price (MUP) for alcoholic beverages and increase excise duties at least in line with inflation;

Tobacco

- Increase the cost of cigarettes;
- Introduce an 'Environmental Levy' on cigarette packs;
- Remove VAT on nicotine replacement patches; and
- Introduce price cap regulation on tobacco industry profits.

The submission provides evidential based figures from a wide variety of research sources. It also provides detailed financial projections regarding the recommendations.

Submission 34: Rural Link

The submission identifies the key challenges in rural Ireland as the need to develop rural regeneration strategies; rural income protection; education costs; rural energy poverty, enterprise & employment creation, rural and regional development; provision of rural Transport and Services.

The submission contains 8 key priorities:

1. Maintain current levels of social welfare payments, Farm Assist and expand the Rural Social Scheme and Community Services Scheme;
2. Review educational grants and supports for second and third level students;
3. Develop an Energy Poverty Strategy and adopt the proposals of the Energy Poverty Coalition, ring fence carbon tax revenue and other measures;
4. Support entrepreneurs and diversify employment in rural areas including an employment based training programme;
5. Develop an investment strategy to deliver fibre based broadband to 500,000 rural households;

6. Design environmental programmes to protect the environment and create jobs;
7. Put rainwater collection systems on all farms; and
8. Provide financial support to farmers under the new EU Programme for Rural Development.

Submission 35: Simon Communities Ireland

The Submission is based on three Key Proposals with critical priorities outlined:

1. Access to Housing for Homeless People.
 - Social Housing and Homeless Budget;
 - Rent Supplement, Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and Rent Allowance Scheme (RAS);
 - Approved Housing Bodies;
 - Private Rental Sector; and
 - NAMA Bodies.
2. Access to Support in Housing.
 - HSE Social Inclusion Budget;
 - Drug and Alcohol Services;
 - Mental Health;
 - Education and Training; and
 - Action to Prevent Homelessness.
3. Access to Support in Housing and Action to Prevent Homelessness
 - Preventative and Early Intervention and Social Protection Budget;
 - Basic Social Welfare Payments,
 - Age related Social Welfare; and
 - Prescription charges.

Submission 36: Small Firms Association (SFA)

The submission identifies five key issues and makes specific proposals under each of these.

1. Fiscal Adjustment.

- The submission contends that budget 2015 should only deliver the minimum net fiscal adjustment package to reach a 2.9% fiscal deficit target.

2. Support investment and jobs through the tax system.

- Enhance the Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme (EIIS) by broadening the criteria and rebranding;
- Reduce Capital Gains Tax (CGT) BY 20% and reform CGT Entrepreneur's relief;
- Reintroduce lower rate of PRSI for employers;
- Amend Foreign Earnings Deduction Scheme;
- Introduce R&D tax credit 'lite' scheme;
- Extend 9% special VAT rate and cap all other consumer taxes;
- Increase VAT cash receipts basis threshold to €2.5 million; and
- Reform local property tax.

3. Taxation of Work.

- Reduce taxes by increasing the marginal rate and the point of entry to the marginal rate and dropping the pension levy;
- Abolish the 3% USC surcharge for the self employed;
- Equalise the PAYE tax credit; and
- Introduce voluntary PRSI contributions for self employed.

4. Don't increase the cost of employment.

- Do not impose further costs in budget 2015 by increasing PRSI, illness benefit, redundancy rebate, health insurance and general taxation.

5. Make work attractive.

- Remove social welfare traps for those returning to work.
- Maintain JobBridge and Jobs Plus schemes.

6. Expenditure priorities.

- Increase capital spending on infrastructure.
- Reduce current spending through increased efficiencies and reforms in the public sector.

Submission 37: Social Justice Ireland (SJI)

The submission contains the following key proposals:

- Provide significant investment in social housing to increase supply;
- Roll out rural broadband;
- Invest in adult literacy services;
- Invest in disability services;
- Introduce a universal state pension;
- Make tax credits refundable;
- Increase the PAYE tax credit by €5.00 a week; and
- Increase core social welfare payments by €5.00 a week.

Debt Reduction

- Introduce a minimum effective corporate tax rate of 6%;
- Provide tax reliefs only at the Standard Rate;
- and introduce a Financial Transactions Tax.
-

Submission 38: Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland.

Focuses on 3 key areas:

1. Increase the supply of housing;
2. Increase the supply in private rental sector; and
3. Increase the supply in the commercial property sector.

A series of recommendations are contained under each of these headings.

The overall message is that there is a serious problem with supply, both in the residential and commercial sectors, particularly in the Dublin area. Given the demographics and projected growth in population trends, the submission contends that the supply issue needs to be addressed as a top national priority.

Submission 39: Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The submission contains the following 3 key proposals:

1. 2015 Budget should tackle poverty and social exclusion;
2. It should tackle unemployment and provide requisite supports to jobless households;
and
3. It should invest in children and young people.

These 3 key recommendations are outlined in further detail with a breakdown into sub issues. The submission also gives specific figures to support the recommendations. It also provides a detailed 'Blueprint' or 'Road Map' of suggested Policy Priorities with Lead Departments clearly identified.

Submission 40: Think Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC)

The submission contains 6 key Proposals:

1. Increase Public Service Provision;
2. Introduce Third Marginal Rate of Income Tax;
3. Reduce non basic Tax Reliefs;
4. Reduce PRSI to avoid employers having to make large payments as part of wage Increases;
5. Increase Tax Credits; and
6. Reduce VAT rate by 1%.

The Submission entitled '*A Defence of Taxation; Progressive Alternatives to reducing Public Services through Tax Cuts*' provides a) detailed costings and b) specific details regarding implementation of the proposed measures.

Submission 41: Threshold

The submission is divided into two main categories: measures related to threats to the housing market and measures related to improving the efficiency of the housing market and breaks these down into specific recommendations.

Measures related to threats to the housing market.

- Introduce a stimulus for private housing construction in budget 2015 with retention of Part V requirement;
- Provide significant financial package for social housing provision and housing provision for the homeless;
- Promote institutional investment in the private and social rented sectors;
- Safeguard those in receipt of Rent Supplement;

- Extend current Security of Tenure provisions and protect tenants by changing the legal and regulatory code;
- Put resources in place to speed up the roll out of the Housing Assistance payment (HAP) and make provision to enable higher rent payments under HAP where necessary; and
- Consider amending the tax code to encourage landlords to accept low income households as tenants.

Measures related to improving the efficiency of the housing market

- Introduce Rent Control measures;
- Provide homelessness prevention services and a housing led approach to combat homelessness and amend Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988;
- Introduce a certification scheme for private rented properties;
- Operationalise the Deposit Protection Scheme when legislation is enacted;
- Ensure any third banking force enables those who are having difficulty accessing mortgage credit but who could meet the repayments.

Submission 43: Treoir

The submission provides a history of the abolished One Parent Family Tax Credit and gives the current context and the impact of the change since its abolition.

The key Recommendation is not explicit but implies that the Minister for Finance, in liaison with the Revenue Commissioners, should conduct a review of the abolition of the One Parent Family Tax Credit (OPFTC) and its replacement with the Single Person Child Carer Tax Credit (SPCCTC), with specific reference to the financial impact this has had on parents who are secondary care givers and can no longer claim the tax credit, as a matter of priority.

INDIVIDUALS

Submission 1: Philip Brennan

The summary recommends an examination of the income tax exemption limit for over 65s.

Submission 2: Paul Brophy

The submission recommends a reduction in public service related tax.

Submission 3: Pat Buckley

The submission recommends:

- A reduction in USC and Water Charges;
- Extension of the medical card threshold;
- Specific treatment for mental health patients;
- Support for genuine job seekers;
- Reduction in the TV licence;
- Restrictions on the sale of alcohol;
- Privatisation of State Bodies;
- Abolishment of all Quangos;
- Reduction in GAA funding; and
- Reduction in the cost of Government.

Submission 4: Joyce Conlan

The submission recommends:

- Reduction in USC, DIRT tax and road tax; and
- An examination of levies specifically regarding private health insurance.

Submission 5: John Connor

The submission recommends the outsourcing of medical operations and detention facilities to Asian countries.

Submission 6: Kevin Cunningham

The submission recommends:

- Using the Northern Ireland model to reduce road tax;
- Increasing fuel tax; and
- Reducing USC.

Submission 7: Regina Doherty T.D.

The Submission states that the drinks industry, particularly the independent Off-Licence trade, provides employment nationwide. However, business closures and job losses have increased significantly in the industry over the last few years. This is caused principally by cheap alcohol sold in mixed trading outlets. It recommends:

- Not increasing alcohol duty in Budget 2015;
- Setting a Minimum Price, based on the alcohol content of an alcoholic beverage, below which no alcoholic beverage can be sold.

Submission 8: Niall Donnelly

The submission, inter alia, recommends:

- Reducing social welfare after 15 years;
- Giving tax credits for childcare costs;
- Reducing USC;
- Increasing PRSI;
- Introducing a third PAYE rate;
- Abolishing private healthcare;
- Addressing Tracker Mortgage differentials;

- Managing the household charge; and
- Introducing on the spot fines.

Submission 9: Patrick Dromey

The submission recommends that the Pension Levy should not exceed 0.6% as indicated at its introduction in 2012.

Submission 10: Rosanna Egan

The submission recommends the introduction of a tax credit for children of working people to help with childcare costs

Submission 11: Una Farrren.

The submission recommends a reduction in tax and the abolishment of carbon, water and property taxes.

Submission 12: Andrew Harte

The submission recommends raising revenue from alternative sources such as motorway advertising space; renting Government buildings; closing embassies; selling space within public institutions and other means.

Submission 13: Ciaran Keenan

The submission recommends :

- Capping politicians pay at average industrial wage with only 1 Pension allowed;
- Improving rural infrastructure;
- Investing in renewable energy;
- Abolishing Council rates for SMEs; and
- Completing Seanad reform.

Submission 14: Lidie Kirk

The submission recommends taxing the sex industry.

Submission 16: Philip McArdle

The submission recommends:

- Mandatory workplace pensions;
- 5 year agreement with Companies to pay full Corporation Tax;
- Full income disclosure;
- Abolishing Companies registered to avoid tax;
- Auditing cash businesses more;
- Abolishing road tax and increasing diesel costs;
- Renting school halls during holidays;
- Capping GP visits to 12 per annum under the proposed Universal Medical Insurance.

Submission 17: Elizabeth Maddox

The submission recommends:

- Maintaining Family Carers and Disability Benefits;
- Imposing €50 annual charge on medical card holders; and
- Addressing the issue of pre existing medical conditions regarding health insurance.

Submission 18: Alain Melia

The submission recommends giving a financial stimulus to the economy through PAYE tax rebates.

Submission 19: Betty Murray

The submission recommends:

- Extending medical cards to the sick and elderly but not to under 6 year olds;
- Restoring the Household Benefit Package;
- Reducing indirect taxes for the elderly;
- Cutting TDs expenses and pensions;

- Reducing overseas aid; and
- Reducing legal assistance to Non Nationals.

Submission 20: Francis McCarthy

The submission recommends that people renting because of unsuitable family homes should be allowed the rental cost of the rented property as an allowable expense in calculating income tax liability for the rental income they receive on the family home.

Submission 21: Gemma O'Donnell

The submission recommends abolishing civil and public service allowances, reducing increments and re-benchmarking.

Submission 22: Sean O Kelly

The submission recommends that Mobility & Transport Grants for disabled people should be raised by at least €40.00

Submission 23: Patricia O'Sullivan

The submission recommends, inter alia:

- Reducing the cost of living;
- Giving all elderly and sick people medical cards;
- Enhancing public transport;
- Making Leinster House alcohol free;
- Not employing agency staff in Government Departments; and
- Paying Child Benefit at the rate of the country where the children reside.

Submission 24: Brian Prendergast

The submission recommends

- Public Service Pay Related deduction;
- Changes to bands and abolishment of USC; and
- No change to PRSI.

Submission 25: Nicholas Reeves

The submission recommends:

- Capping public sector pay at €100,000;
- Abolishing Irish Water;
- Securing post tribunal recoupments from individuals found guilty of financial wrongdoing;
- Charging licence fees for commercial sea fisheries;
- Abolishing stallion fees;
- Introducing a Retrofit Programme and;
- Leaving the Euro.

Submission 26: Damien Shiels

The submission recommends increasing from 30% to 60% the amount that can be withdrawn from Retirement Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC)s .

Submission 27: Simon Urbanksi

The submission recommends, inter alia:

- Reducing allowances for TDs and Senators;
- Restricting Unemployment Assistance;
- Having Government payslips e-mailed only;
- Reducing Criminal Legal Aid;
- Abolishing private school funding;
- Capping Pay of Charity Sector CEOs;
- Changing Tax Rates; and
- Taxing Lottery Winnings.

1. CONCLUSION.

This country has come through one of the most challenging periods in recent history. The economic recession has impacted on almost everyone in society.

The economic outlook is now more positive with strong evidence of sustained growth. The country's economic destiny is once again in its own hands. It is imperative that the positive gains in Ireland's economic performance are sustained and budgetary measures are used effectively in this regard. The focus of all policy should continue to be on areas of crucial importance such as, inter alia, job creation; financial stability; growth in the indigenous business sector and sustainable Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Ireland is, however, more than an economy. It is also a society where the needs of people should always be of paramount importance. Budget 2015 should seek to protect vulnerable groups and redress the imbalances that still exist and prevent a truly equitable society. Issues of serious national concern such as housing provision; child, food and fuel poverty; serious indebtedness and inequality in medical provision all need to be addressed in innovative budgetary measures.

The Committee hopes that the broad range of views expressed in the submissions will inform the Minister for Finance in his deliberations on budget 2015. In particular, the Committee believes it can add real value by assisting him in ensuring it is a balanced budget where economic stability and growth is maintained while the needs of our most vulnerable citizens are met and all our citizens can enjoy a decent quality of life.

List of Members of the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform

Chairman:	Ciarán Lynch (LAB)*****
Deputies:	Richard Boyd Barrett (PBP) Michael Creed (FG) Pearse Doherty (SF) Regina Doherty (FG)***** Stephen S. Donnelly (IND) Timmy Dooley (FF)* Alan Farrell (FG)***** Seán Fleming (FF) Simon Harris (FG) ***** Joe Higgins (SP) Heather Humphreys (FG) Kevin Humphreys (LAB) Mary Lou McDonald (SF) Michael McGrath (FF) Dara Murphy (FG)***** Kieran O'Donnell (FG) Aodhán Ó Riordáin (LAB)***** Arthur Spring (LAB) Brian Stanley (SF)***** Liam Twomey (FG) (Vice-Chair)
Senators:	Seán D. Barrett (IND) Thomas Byrne (FF) Paul Coghlan (FG)***** Michael D'Arcy (FG) Aideen Hayden (LAB) Tom Sheahan (FG)

Notes:

1. Deputies appointed to the Committee by order of the Dáil on 9 June 2011
2. Senators appointed to the Committee by order of the Seanad on 16 June 2011
3. *Deputy Timmy Dooley appointed on 21 June 2011 in place of Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail
4. Deputy Alex White elected as Chairman on 23 June 2011
5. Deputy Liam Twomey elected as Vice Chairperson on 23 June 2011
6. **Deputy Michael McNamara appointed on 8 December 2011 in place of Deputy Thomas P. Broughan
7. ***Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn appointed on 14 December 2011 in place of Deputy Jonathan O'Brien
8. ****Senator Denis O'Donovan appointed on 10 May 2012 in place of Senator Katherine Zappone
9. *****Senator Paul Coghlan appointed on 14 June 2012 in place of Senator Denis O'Donovan
10. *****Deputy Dara Murphy appointed on 19 July 2012 in place of Deputy Olivia Mitchell
11. *****Deputy Brian Stanley appointed on 25 September 2012 in place of Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn

12. *****Deputy Alex White promoted Minister of State 2 October 2012, Deputy Ciarán Lynch replaced Deputy White by order of the Dáil on 10 October 2012 and was elected Chairman 10 October 2012
13. *****Deputy Simon Harris appointed on 28 November 2012 in place of Deputy Jim Daly
14. *****Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin appointed on 28 November 2012 in place of Deputy Michael McNamara
15. *****Deputy Regina Doherty appointed on 3 July 2013 in place of Deputy Peter Mathews
16. *****Deputy Paschal Donohoe appointed on 3 July 2013 in place of Deputy Billy Timmins and discharged on his appointment as Minister of State 12 July 2013 being replaced by Deputy Alan Farrell by order of the Dáil on 18 July 2013

Orders of Reference of the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform

a. Functions of the Committee – derived from Standing Orders [DSO 82A; SSO 70A]

- (1) The Select Committee shall consider and report to the Dáil on—
 - (a) such aspects of the expenditure, administration and policy of the relevant Government Department or Departments and associated public bodies as the Committee may select, and
 - (b) European Union matters within the remit of the relevant Department or Departments.
- (2) The Select Committee may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann to form a Joint Committee for the purposes of the functions set out below, other than at paragraph (3), and to report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Select Committee shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments, such—
 - (a) Bills,
 - (b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 164,
 - (c) Estimates for Public Services, and
 - (d) other matters as shall be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil, and
 - (e) Annual Output Statements, and
 - (f) such Value for Money and Policy Reviews as the Select Committee may select.
- (4) The Joint Committee may consider the following matters in respect of the relevant Department or Departments and associated public bodies, and report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas:
 - (a) matters of policy for which the Minister is officially responsible,
 - (b) public affairs administered by the Department,
 - (c) policy issues arising from Value for Money and Policy Reviews conducted or commissioned by the Department,
 - (d) Government policy in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department,
 - (e) policy issues concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by a member of the Government or the Oireachtas,
 - (f) the general scheme or draft heads of any Bill published by the Minister,
 - (g) statutory instruments, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009,
 - (h) strategy statements laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas pursuant to the Public Service Management Act 1997,
 - (i) annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law, and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of the Department or bodies referred to in paragraph (4)(d) and (e) and the overall operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of such bodies, and
 - (j) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil and/or Seanad from time to time.
- (5) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Joint Committee shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments—
 - (a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 105, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,

- (b) other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,
 - (c) non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, and
 - (d) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers and the outcome of such meetings.
- (6) A sub-Committee stands established in respect of each Department within the remit of the Select Committee to consider the matters outlined in paragraph (3), and the following arrangements apply to such sub-Committees:
 - (a) the matters outlined in paragraph (3) which require referral to the Select Committee by the Dáil may be referred directly to such sub-Committees, and
 - (b) each such sub-Committee has the powers defined in Standing Order 83(1) and (2) and may report directly to the Dáil, including by way of Message under Standing Order 87.
- (7) The Chairman of the Joint Committee, who shall be a member of Dáil Éireann, shall also be the Chairman of the Select Committee and of any sub-Committee or Committees standing established in respect of the Select Committee.
- (8) The following may attend meetings of the Select or Joint Committee, for the purposes of the functions set out in paragraph (5) and may take part in proceedings without having a right to vote or to move motions and amendments:
 - (a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland, including Northern Ireland,
 - (b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and
 - (c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.

b. Scope and Context of Activities of Committees (as derived from Standing Orders [DSO 82; SSO 70])

- (1) The Joint Committee may only consider such matters, engage in such activities, exercise such powers and discharge such functions as are specifically authorised under its orders of reference and under Standing Orders.
- (2) Such matters, activities, powers and functions shall be relevant to, and shall arise only in the context of, the preparation of a report to the Dáil and/or Seanad.
- (3) It shall be an instruction to all Select Committees to which Bills are referred that they shall ensure that not more than two Select Committees shall meet to consider a Bill on any given day, unless the Dáil, after due notice given by the Chairman of the Select Committee, waives this instruction on motion made by the Taoiseach pursuant to Dáil Standing Order 26. The Chairmen of Select Committees shall have responsibility for compliance with this instruction.
- (4) The Joint Committee shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to Dáil Standing Order 163 and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993.
- (5) The Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by—
 - (a) a member of the Government or a Minister of State, or
 - (b) the principal office-holder of a body under the aegis of a Department or which is partly or wholly funded by the State or established or appointed by a member of the Government or by the Oireachtas:

Provided that the Chairman may appeal any such request made to the Ceann Comhairle / Cathaoirleach whose decision shall be final.

List of individuals and organisations that made 2015 Pre-budget Submissions

Individuals:

Philip Brennan

Paul Brophy

Pat Buckley

Joyce Conlan

John Connor

Kevin Cunningham

Regina Doherty T.D.

Niall Donnelly

Patrick Dromey

Rosanna Egan

Una Farren

Andrew Harte

Ciaran Keenan

Lidie Kirk

Philip McArdle

Elizabeth Maddox

Alain Melia

Betty Murray

Francis McCarthy

Gemma O'Donnell

Sean O Kelly

Patricia O'Sullivan

Brian Prendergast

Nicholas Reeves

Damien Shiels

Simon Urbanski

Organisations:

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Ireland

Alzheimer Society of Ireland

Amnesty International

Ash Ireland

Blackwater Motors and Audi Cork

Chambers Ireland

Drinks Industry Group of Ireland (DIGI)

European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)

Fighting Blindness

Focus Ireland

Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)

Glohealth Financial Services Limited

Hardware Association of Ireland

Home and Community Care Ireland (HCCI)

Ibec

Institute Of Directors

Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers (IPAV)

Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)

Irish Cancer Society

Irish Creamery & Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA)

Irish Farmers Association (IFA)

Irish Heart Foundation

Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)

Irish Medical Organisation (IMO)

Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA)

Kilmihil People's Park Limited

Mental Health Reform

National Off Licence Association (NAFFLA)

National Newspapers Ireland

National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)

One Family

Property Industry Ireland

Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI)

Rural Link

Simon Communities Ireland:

Small Firms Association (SFA)

Social Justice Ireland (SJI)

Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Think Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC)

Threshold

Treoir

List of Witnesses - Public hearings: Pre-budget Submissions; Budget 2015

Tuesday, 15 July 2014

SESSION 1: ECONOMY AND TAXATION

TASC:

Dr. Nat O'Connor, Director, Think Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC)

Chambers Ireland:

Mr. Ian Talbot, Chief Executive

Drinks Industry Group of Ireland:

Mr. Padraig Cribben, Board Member

Ibec:

Ms. Mary Rose Burke, Director of Business Representation

Wednesday, 16 July 2014

SESSION 2: SOCIAL PROTECTION

Rural Link:

Mr. James Claffey, Policy and Communications Officer, Rural Link.

Social Justice Ireland (SJI):

Ms. Michelle Murphy, Policy and Research Analyst.

Home and Community Care Ireland (HCCI):

Mr Michael Harty, Chairperson.

European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN):

Mr. Robin Hanan, Director.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul:

Ms. Caroline Fahey, Social Policy Development Officer

Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)

Ms. Yvonne O'Sullivan, Advocacy and Policy Officer

SESSION 3: ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers (IPAV):

Mr. Patrick Davitt, CEO

Threshold:

Mr. Bob Jordan, Chief Executive

Focus Ireland:

Mr. Mike Allen, Director of Advocacy

Simon Communities Ireland:

Ms. Niamh Randall, Head of Policy and Communications

Thursday, 17 July 2014

SESSION 4: HEALTH**Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI):**

Professor Frank Murray

Irish Cancer Society

Ms. Kathleen O'Meara, Head of Advocacy and Communications

Irish Heart Foundation

Ms. Cliona Loughnane, Policy and Research Manager

Alzheimer Society of Ireland:

Mr Gerry Martin, Chief Executive

Mental Health Reform

Dr. Shari McDaid, Director

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Ireland:

Ms. Barbara O'Connell, CEO

SESSION 5: AGRICULTURE AND TRANSPORT**Irish Farmers Association (IFA):**

Mr. Eddie Downey, President

Mr Pat Smith, General Secretary

Irish Creamery & Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA):

Mr. John Comer, President

Blackwater Motors and Audi Cork:

Mr. Denis Murphy, Managing Director

Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA):

Mr. Eoin Gavin, President

