OECD REPORT – TOWARDS AN INTERGRATED PUBLIC SERVICE

by Ciaran Rohan, Assistant General Secretary

In January 2007, the former Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern T.D., announced that he had invited the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation & Development (OECD) to undertake a major review of the Irish Public Service. The review had two main objectives:

- to benchmark the Public Service in Ireland against other comparable countries; and
- to make recommendations as to future directions for Public Service reform.

On Monday, 28 April 2008, the report was formally launched. This first ever review of the whole of the Public Service looks at how it compares with other OECD countries, and makes recommendations for the future direction of the Public Service.

Four key themes were examined by the OECD: the capacity of the public service, performance & budgeting, governance, and service delivery. As well as wide-ranging consultation and meetings with the public service, the OECD also held a series of extensive fact-finding missions in Ireland throughout 2007. In addition over 900 submissions were received from organisations and private individuals including two from this Association.

The Report recognises that "the Irish Public Service has played a central role in ensuring that the right economic, regulatory, educational and social conditions are in place to facilitate growth and development." The Report also recognises the value of the extensive reform efforts undertaken to date – in customer service, e-government, HR, financial management and better regulation.

The OECD’s main recommendation is the concept of the Public Service as a more integrated ‘system’ – essentially getting people within the different elements of the Irish Public Service system to work in a more consistent, co-ordinated, networked way across the traditional sectoral and organisational boundaries. It is not envisaged that the structure of the Public Service will change but that existing Departments, Offices, and Agencies interact with each other in new ways ensuring integrated action in policy-making, delivery and implementation. This may require greater pooling and sharing of information, data and resources, a common pursuit of objectives, and greater governance of state agencies, offices and bodies under the aegis of Departments.

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# AHCPS Officers, Executive & Standing Orders Committee for 2008/2009

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* Eoin Faherty, Houses of the Oireachtas and Bernard O’Shea, Arts, Sport & Tourism were co-opted by the Executive Committee under Rule 11 (a)(ii) of the rules and constitution.

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Following on from the Report, the Government intends pursuing a comprehensive programme of renewal to move towards a world-class public service equipped to meet current and future challenges. In this regard the Government recently appointed a Task Force to develop an Action Plan for the Public Service to report to Government before the end of the summer.

The Terms of Reference are to prepare for consideration by the Government, a comprehensive framework for renewal of the public service, which takes into account the analysis and conclusions of the OECD Report, as well as the lessons to be drawn from the Strategic Management Initiative, the Organisational Review Programme and the Efficiency Review Process. In addition the Task Force is to recommend, in particular, how best to secure:

- a strategy by which e-government delivers coherent and citizen-focused services and more closely supports greater efficiency in administrative processes;
- an implementation plan, specifying the tasks, and responsibilities necessary for the successful implementation of the renewal agenda, including the ways in which the principle of partnership with public servants and their representatives will be applied.

Of the many issues in the Report which are of interest to this Association is the concept of a Senior Public Service. The OECD considered that:

- there is a need for a planned, structured approach to developing future leaders of the public service;
- there is an opportunity for the cross-fertilisation of the skills and competencies in the wider public service and for building regional talent pools and a “whole of Government” ethos;
- there should be better performance dialogue between centre/line Departments/Agencies.

Julie O’Neill, Secretary General, Department of Transport, speaking at the recent IPA National Conference entitled A Public Service for the Future – The OECD Challenge, considered that the target group for a Senior Public Service to be around 1,500. This figure would include Assistant Secretaries General, Principal Officers, Local Authority County Managers and Directors of Services, Health Service Executives and possibly other non-commercial State Bodies. The AHCPS also considers that Assistant Principal Officers should be included in such a Service.

The Association welcomes the Report. It is clear from the Report that the Irish Public Service compares very favourably with Public Services in other countries. This is against the background of comparatively less numbers employed in the Irish Public Service and comparatively less expenditure on Public Services relative to our OECD counterparts. The Association will engage positively with regard to the recommendations of the Report and with the Task Force on the Public Service.

**TRANSFER REQUESTS**

AP working in Meath seeks job-sharing partner on a split week basis. If interested in transferring to Meath please contact the post holder at (087) 2511748.

AP Standard/Investigator, currently working in the Office of the Ombudsman, 18, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2, with flexitime – not decentralising – is interested in getting a head-to-head swap within Dublin to a non-decentralising post with flexitime available. If anyone is interested I can be contacted at 087-7561523.
Conference Overview

John Kelleher

Croke Park in early May was the venue for the 2008 Annual Delegate Conference of the Association which took place on Friday 9th May. The Conference facilities in the Hogan Stand section were top class and showed a different side of this magnificent stadium to many people.

The Chairperson Ciaran Rohan on opening the Conference welcomed the delegates, press and in particular our guests Jonathan Baume General Secretary FDA in London and Peter Stephens FDA London along with Sam Caul and Laura McPolin Northern Ireland FDA.

After the adoption of the 2007 minutes, the appointment of tellers and the adoption of standing orders report the Chairperson Ciaran Rohan in his address to conference outlined the issues that were of major concern to the Association over the previous year. He outlined how decentralisation continued to dominate the agenda, that the Association while not opposed to decentralisation saw difficulties in this model and had called for a review particularly in light of the recent OECD report which stated that there were many challenges in this present model. The Chairperson also expressed the Associations disappointment at the recent benchmarking awards and while there is a need for an independent pay determination system, it must be one in which there is confidence. Ciaran also touched briefly on the proposed changes to the C&A scheme. Concluding he paid tribute to the many branch activists and looked forward to working with them and for them in his new role as Assistant General Secretary. Ciaran takes up that role from 26th May. The full text of Ciaran’s speech is published elsewhere in the newsletter.

The General Secretary Dave Thomas in his first year as General Secretary presented the annual report to conference. He outlined that the major issues over the past year were the publication of the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Section in September. The Report of the Public Service Benchmarking Body in January and the OECD Report Ireland Towards an Integrated Public Service in April. These together with the commencement of new pay talks, changes to the C&A scheme, and decentralisation will be the focus of activity for the incoming Executive Committee.

The General Secretary outlined how the Benchmarking body on this occasion had changed the methodology used to compare civil service grades with the private sector in three specific areas since the first benchmarking body report.

- The use of a weighed average as against the mid point of the scale
- A large increase in the number of small and medium size firms for comparison purposes
- A deduction of 12% for the value of civil service pensions.

He outlined that one of the issues for the Executive to consider is whether there should be two pay review bodies or whether the work should be done by one body. However, whatever system is agreed the union side will be insisting that as part of the terms of reference the methodology to be used will have to be agreed in advance.

The General Secretary outlined that there are proposals before the staff panel from the two largest civil service unions IMPACT and CPSU for a change in the C&A scheme which would result in civil servants having access to the Labour Relations Commission, Labour Court and Rights Commissioner. When this comes to pass it will be the biggest change to the Industrial Relation machinery of the civil service in over sixty years.

On decentralisation the General Secretary welcomed the recent OECD Report which outlined many of the difficulties that the Association had previously outlined in our two previous publications to many aspects of the current decentralisation or more correctly named administrative relocation programme. While outlining that the Association is not opposed to decentralisation and recognising and welcoming the benefits to the public and our members of a well thought out and rational model of decentralisation, there are many flaws in the current model and the Association was again seeking a review.

The General Secretary in welcoming the report of the OECD, noted that the Irish Public Service stands up well when compared with Public Services in other countries. The report also notes that the numbers employed in the Irish Public Service are significantly less in relative terms than the level of public employment in many other European countries. While expenditure on the public
service had increased substantially, the OECD report points our that much of these increases have reflected a need to pay catch-up from historically low levels. In comparison with other OECD countries, Ireland has been able to deliver services with a Public Service that is relatively small given the size of the economy and labour force. The Association will engage with the official side on the recommendations in the report. The full text of the General Secretary's speech is printed elsewhere in the newsletter.

The Treasurer Mary McLoughlin in her report gave a review on the Associations finances for the year 2007. The main points were that the Association was in a sound financial state. The mortgage on the Association's head office was cleared during the year and the membership subscription rate had been reduced from 0.6% to 0.5% of salary from January 2008. The main points of the Treasures report are produced elsewhere in the newsletter. Mary also gave a brief update on the work being done on updating the Association's web site.

There were thirty four motions down for debate. This year saw a change in the format of conference with the aim of making it run smoother and finishing by lunch time rather than running for an hour into the afternoon with very few delegates remaining for the afternoon session. The two main changes were rather than breaking for a 15 minutes coffee break which generally lasted 40 minutes to just cancel the coffee break and to have coffee permanently available and the second change was to debate as a group a number of motions on pay and likewise with a number of motions on decentralisation. This concept worked very well and it will most likely be adopted for future ADCs.

The first motions debated saw a change in the rules which will see conference being reduced in delegate numbers by about 30% from next year. The present rule of one delegate for every 15 members or part thereof is being replaced by a new rule which allows branches two delegates for the first 30 members and one delegate per thirty members or part thereof.

There was a very lively debate on the pay and benchmarking motions with particular emphasis on the benchmarking bodies' decision to factor in a 12% reduction to take account of pension contributions.

There was an equally lively debate on decentralisation with many passionate oratorical flourishes from delegates who had strong views on aspects of the present proposals. The clear view from the conference was that while the Association has no objection to decentralisation; particularly a rational thought out model that enhances public service delivery, this model has many flaws that need to be addressed. The overwhelming view was that this model of decentralisation needs to be reviewed. This portion of the conference received very good media coverage particularly from RTE, where the General Secretary Dave Thomas was interview for the one o'clock radio news. It also featured on the six o'clock and nine o'clock TV news bulletins.

There were also motions on equality issues, health & safety issues, tax credits, annual leave, the third world/charity fund as well as motions on the Association's organisation. Details on the motions passed and remitted are outlined elsewhere in this newsletter.

Delegates and their partners along with our guests from the official side, our sister civil service trade unions and our honorary President Donal O Mahony and his wife and our honorary Vice Presidents and their partners attended the conference reception and dinner later that night which was also held in the Croke Park Conference Centre.
Address by AHCPS Chairperson

Ciaran Rohan

Chuirann sé mór-áthas orm fáilte a chuir roimh gach éinne inniu. Colleagues, I am privileged to welcome you the members, our guests and our fraternal delegates from Northern Ireland and England to the 2008 Annual Delegate Conference of the Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants. I consider it a great honour to have been Chairperson of the Association for the past year and I thank you for giving me that chance.

I don’t know if some of you ended up in the Burlington Hotel this morning but it’s a great opportunity for me to address you from this our first visit to Croke Park. As a Corkman I am accustomed to being in the hallowed surroundings of this magnificent stadium but for those of you, who haven’t been here before, enjoy your day.

I must begin my address to you today on a somewhat downbeat note, as I pay tribute to the memory of two former leading activists in the Association who passed away during the year.

Mick O’Donoghue, a former member of the Revenue branch, died in March this year. Mick was Chairman of the Association and served in that role between 1989 and 1991. We were also saddened by the death of Charlie Murray. Charlie was a member of the Finance branch and also a Chairman of the Association, serving between 1957 and 1959.

I want to briefly review what has been a very busy year for the Association. Some of the issues that I will touch on are the subject of motions on the agenda today, and will be covered by the General Secretary, Dave Thomas, in his address to Conference on the Annual Report, so I don’t intend to discuss them in detail in my address.

It was a year in which certain issues such as decentralisation continued to dominate the agenda. I would like to re-iterate that the Association is not opposed to decentralisation. Decentralisation, when properly planned and introduced is fully supported by the Association. But, unfortunately, a significant element of the current programme is not properly thought out. For example, one of the major challenges that arise is that, as the programme gathers more pace and more members are being transferred between Departments, the “churn” factor becomes very high. This is causing significant service delivery problems for our members and must be addressed by Government.

The recently-published OECD review of the Irish Public Service considered that there are many challenges inherent in the decentralisation programme. Among the issues it noted were that a significant number of applicants for new decentralised locations were already based in provincial locations and that many of the Dublin-based applicants had applied to areas that were over-subscribed.

Staying with the theme of the OECD review, they also note that, even though there are less people employed in the Irish Public Service and that our expenditure is coming from an historically low base, the quality of the Irish Public Service compares very favourably with other OECD countries.

The new national pay talks have started. However, they have commenced against a backdrop of rising disquiet because of the erosion, by inflation, of the increases agreed under Towards 2016. In addition, early in the New Year, saw the publication of the report of the Public Sector Benchmarking Body. I don’t need to remind you how disappointed we all were with the outcome of this report. There must be confidence in any independent pay determination system and, while we would undoubtedly wish to see an independent system in operation, we need to examine whether we can have trust in the current system or whether changes need to be made.

So, while the national social partnership model has been good for AHCPS members, we will not enter talks for talk’s sake. Along with our colleague Unions from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, we will not enter into a pay agreement that effectively reduces our members pay in real terms.

It was a year in which there remain a number of outstanding issues in the Semi-State Sector. Our members at Level 3 in An Post are currently considering new proposals in relation to performance related pay. Decentralisation continues to be a major concern for our members in FÁS and in the other semi-state agencies. In the Irish Aviation Authority, along with the other Unions, we are in discussions with management regarding their proposals to amend the pension scheme.
What could be one of the biggest changes to the State’s industrial relations machinery in over fifty years could be upon us in the forthcoming year. The two largest civil service unions, who have the majority of seats on the Staff Panel, have decided to pull out of the Conciliation and Arbitration scheme and lodge a claim to allow the Labour Relations Commission and Labour Court to deal with claims from the civil service unions in the context of industrial relations matters. This is potentially a significant challenge for the Association but one which we are ready to meet.

In conclusion, I would like to record my appreciation of the hard work put in all through the year by my colleagues on the Executive Committee. I would particularly like to thank my fellow officers, Peadar Carpenter and Mary McLoughlin for their effort and their wisdom. I also want to wish the very best of luck to Peadar as incoming Chairperson and Tom Allen as incoming Vice-Chairperson.

I would like to pay tribute to the Association’s many Branch activists and Committee members. Branch activists, who are in regular communication with members, are vital to the success of any Association or Union, and the AHCPS is no exception. Can I also thank Tom Quigley, Joe Brennan and Laura Noonan for helping out with the conference today and indeed throughout the year.

I would like to thank my own colleagues on the Education and Science branch for giving me the opportunity to represent them on the Executive and as Vice-Chairperson and Chairperson of the Association.

I cannot emphasise enough how grateful I am for the professionalism, expertise, invaluable advice and hard work of the Association’s officials and staff – Dorothy Aughey, Pat Feeney, Jackie Lacey, John Kelleher and Dave Thomas. Of course I have to say nice things about the Head Office staff as I was delighted to be recently appointed to the position of Assistant General Secretary of the Association. I look forward to working with Head Office staff and working for the Executive and you the members in my new capacity.

As I said at the outset, it is my privilege to welcome you all to Croke Park. I wish you all the best for a productive and enjoyable Conference today.

Bail ó Dhia ar an obháir atá le déanamh againn inniu.

Thank you.

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**Tom Allen, Vice Chairperson**

Mr. Tom Allen, Revenue Commissioners branch, was elected to the position of Vice Chairperson of the Association at this year’s ADC. Tom is from Rathangan in County Kildare and has been living in Navan for a long number of years.

Tom joined the civil service in 1975 and has worked in the Departments of Agriculture; Enterprise and Employment; Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and since the beginning of this year in the Revenue Commissioners in the Meath District at their new offices near his home in Navan.

Tom has had an active involvement in civil service trade union affairs and was chairman of the Department of Agriculture branch of the PSEU during the 1980s/1990s. He was a member of the PSEU Executive Committee for many years, serving as Vice President and President of the union. He has served on both the Agriculture and CRAGA branches of the AHCPS and has been a member of the Executive Committee since 2004.

Tom is married to Rose and has five children. His brother Joe who works in Environment, Heritage and Local Government is a long serving member of the Executive Committee of the Association while his brother Andrew is chair of the Association’s Health & Safety Authority branch. He is a keen follower of all sports (a long suffering Kildare supporter) and has a keen interest in current affairs and politics.
As outlined at the ADC in May there was a claim due before the General Council Staff Panel sponsored by IMPACT and supported by CPSU to allow for the necessary amendments to be made to the Industrial Relations Act to allow civil service grades represented by the constituent unions of staff panel access to the Rights Commissioners Service, Labour Relations Commission and Labour Court.

The Claim was discussed at the May Staff Panel where after much discussion it was put to a vote. The outcome of the vote was that by a majority of one the claim was passed.

The Claim was subsequently lodged at the May General Council. The Official Side indicated that it requires primary legislation to make the necessary changes. It was agreed to set up a sub committee comprising representatives of the official Side and the staff Side to explore further the changes that will be required in the existing scheme.

The Sub Committee will be chaired by Dave Hurley, PO Department of Finance. The Staff Side representatives are Dave Thomas, General Secretary AHCPS; Blair Horan, General Secretary CPSU; Louise O’Donnell, National Secretary IMPACT; John Clinton General Secretary POA; Tom Geraghty, Deputy General Secretary PSEU. John Kelleher, Chair Staff Panel and Joan Byrne, Secretary Staff Panel.

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Each union has a number of seats at Council depending on their size. Voting is by block vote.

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

After many years of discussions involving the local AHCPS branch, FSAI Management and the Department of Health and Children the Association are happy to report that the upgradings allowed for under the PCW 1% have finally been signed off between the local branch and the FSAI management. A special thanks goes to local branch chairman Pat Farrell and committee for their perseverance in seeing this through to a successful conclusion.

FÁS

There was a presentation recently by the Senior Management in FAS to the three administrative unions AHCPS, CPSU and PSEU on the change and modernisation agenda in that organisation. Following the presentation, the three unions are entering negotiations on the programme in so far as it impacts on their members. Separate negotiations involving FAS management and SIPTU have been under way for some time. The AHCPS Negotiating team comprises of branch officers, Jack Horgan and Mark Crowther assisted by Deputy General Secretary, John Kelleher.

Property Registration Authority (PRA)

Under the auspices of the Partnership Committee the unions in the Property Registration Authority (PRA), formally known as the Land Registry are in discussions in an attempt to see if there is any scope for agreement in relation to the integration of the Technical grades and the Legal grades into the General Service grades. While these discussions have been ongoing for some time agreement has not yet been reached on an outcome.
The Treasurer Mary Mc Loughlin in her report to conference gave an overview of the Association’s accounts for 2007 and gave a report on the payment of the mortgage on the head office building. She also outlined the changes in the membership subscription rate and the impact on income going forward. The main points from Mary’s Report are as follows:

- Income was down marginally on 2006 to €1,627 million. There was one extra pay period in 2006 which accounted for the drop in income in 2007.
- Expenditure decreased in 2007 by 5.6% to €1,149 million.
- There was a surplus of expenditure over income of €478K.
- Investments and savings at end of 2007 were €579K.
- The mortgage on the head office building Fleming’s Hall was cleared during the year.
- Membership numbers at the end of December 2007 were 3,372.
- The membership subscription rate was reduced from 0.6% to 0.5% of salary from January 2008 which represents an average saving of €75 per member per annum.
- Projected income for 2008 will be down by €300K as a result of the reduction in the membership fee.

Mary also gave an update on the work that was in progress on updating and modernising the Association’s web site.

Advisory Council for English Language Schools (ACELS)

The PSEU and AHCPS recently took a case against the Department of Education & Science on behalf of three staff members in ACELS in relation to the provision of a properly funded co-ordinated Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.

The case was heard in the Labour Court on 7th May under the Chairmanship of Mr Ray McGee. The Court found in the unions favour and in its recommendation stated.

“Having considered the submissions made to it by the parties, the Court has come to the view that ACELS is in a unique position in that it is in the total effective control of the Department of Education and is therefore effectively an emanation of the State. The staff concerned are paid on Civil Service salary scales and benchmarking has been applied to them on both occasions, yet they have not had either the benefit or the value of public service pensions.

Given the unique nature of the employment and the small numbers involved, the Court recommends, on a strictly non-precedential basis, that the staff should have the benefit of a properly constituted and funded superannuation scheme, comparable to other public bodies, with payment of arrears to the scheme and which will apply also when the staff are transferred into Education Ireland, when this is set up.”

The Staff in ACELS Jim Ferguson (AHCPS) Betty Cantwell and Sue Hackett (PSEU) were represented at the hearing by Eugene Quinn Assistant General Secretary PSEU and John Kelleher Deputy General Secretary.
ANNUAL DELEGATE
Address to Conference
Dave Thomas, AHCPS Gen. Secretary

Introduction

Chairperson, delegates, guests
During the past year we have had the publication of the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector in September and the Report of the Public Service Benchmarking Body in January and The OECD Report Ireland Towards an Integrated Public Service in April. These together with the commencement of new talks on a national pay agreement will be the focus of activity for the incoming Executive.

The Association during the year appointed John Kelleher as Deputy General Secretary. John who served as Assistant General Secretary with the Association for a number of years took up his appointment last December. Ciaran Rohan who is currently Chairperson of the Association was appointed as Assistant General Secretary following a competitive selection process. Ciaran is due to take up appointment shortly.

Pay & Benchmarking
The first three instalment of the present national pay agreement have been paid in the civil service and in most of the non-commercial semi-state organisation with the final payment due on 1st September 2008. While talks have started on a new agreement there are difficulties particularly on the union side. Different unions have put down different requirements and markers. ICTU have said that they want union recognition sorted out legally and they want the agency workers to be covered by the relevant labour legislation. Some unions feel that the national pay talks in recent years have been too restrictive and have come to a view that “one size does not fit all”. Some of the unions representing lower paid workers want a minimum fixed amount increase instead of a percentage increase. The last agreement did not keep pace with inflation and the union side want this shortfall to be addressed.

However, talks have started and the Association will be involved in the talks at a later stage when they get down to discussing the civil service elements. This will be a difficult phase for the civil service unions because of the results of the benchmarking body report published in January this year. The benchmarking body gave a 1.1% award to the Principal Officer grades and those linked to the PO grades and 0% to all other grades in the civil service. This Benchmarking Body changed the methodology which it used to compare civil service grades and other public service grades with the private sector. There were three main elements which were changed in the methodology. They were

1. The use of a weighted average,
2. A larger number of smaller firms were used for comparison purposes
3. A deduction of 12% for the value of civil service pensions was made.

In the first Benchmarking Body Report and previous arbitrations the mid point of the civil service pay scale was the point that was compared to the pay in the private sector comparator. This time around the weighted average was used. The effect of this was that the PO and AP salaries were pitched at a higher level than they would have been if they had used the mid point of the scale. In our own case we know that it would have brought the PO and AP salaries very close to the max point. So the Body in using the weighted average used a higher civil service point than had been used on previous occasions and no reason was given for this change. This doesn’t make sense because you could have two grades a professional and a general service grade with the same salary scale but could have weighted averages which would differ widely.

In relation to the comparison of the private sector the body compared the civil service to 172 employments employing less than 100 staff and with only 35 employing more than 250 staff. This had a major impact on the level of pay of the grades we were compared with. Anybody who knows the civil service knows that most people are working in Departments with 1,000 or more staff. Revenue alone have approximately 6,500 employees and Social & Family Affairs have about 3,000 employees. The effect of this was that pay comparators in the private sector were considerable lower than they would have been if the comparisons was with companies with 500 employees or more. The level of
responsibilities in bigger companies is higher and the pay of management grades is reflected in this higher level of responsibility.

Finally, the body deducted 12% for the value of public service pensions. Let us now say once and for all. We have paid for our pensions so let that be the end of the issue about public service pensions "hands off our pensions". We did make the point in our submission to the benchmarking body that if you compare the senior management grades of PO and AP in the civil service with senior management grades in the private sector then the reduction for pensions would not have been as high because the majority of people at our level in the private sector have pensions and good pension schemes at that. When you apply one size fits all across the public sector it transpires that people at the lower end in the private sector don’t have as good a pension or don’t have pensions at all. We need to compare like with like.

The Executive will now have to consider the Association's position going forward. One of the issues it is considering is whether there is a need for two review bodies on pay such as the Review Body on Higher Remuneration and The Benchmarking Body or whether the one body should do the whole exercise. Most of the grades examined by the Review Body on Higher Remuneration received increases.

It is inexplicable that the Secretary Generals and Assistant Secretaries received between the interim award in 2005 and the award in 2007 awards of 19.1% and 13% respectively and the grades that their work and responsibilities has been devolved to only receive 1.1% and 0%.

The Executive accepts that there is a need for some form of independent review of civil and public service pay. However, we are not sure if the present system is the correct system. Whatever system is agreed the Association will insist that as part of the terms of reference the methodology to be used will have to be agreed in advance.

The new pay talks will have to take into account that there was no award made to the vast majority of public servants. Modernisation and change will have to be paid for by increases above the projected rate of inflation. Additionally, our members are not going to continually accept the delegation of work from a higher level and receive no pay increase for this increased responsibility while the grades directly above us pull further and further ahead in pay.

Conciliation & Arbitration Scheme
On the Conciliation and Arbitration front there have been discussions at General Council Staff Panel over recent years in relation to abandoning the C&A scheme and using the Labour Relations Commission and Labour Court. IMPACT & CPSU have had motions passed at their conferences for the C&A scheme to be abandoned and to take the conciliation process into the LRC and Labour Court. It has now come to a head and it is likely that the Association along with PSEU, VOA and POA will be out voted. This will be the biggest change to the industrial relations machinery in the civil service in over 60 years.

While this will have some major consequences for us mainly in the area of pay. Under the C&A machinery the government of the day could only overturn a pay award by a vote of the Dail. This has only happened twice in the last 50 years or so. All is not doom and gloom however, as the Labour Relations Commission and Labour Court, offer some flexibility in the industrial relations field which the C & A doesn’t and there are other advantages in going to the Labour Relation Commission and Labour Court. If the proposed changes happen individual civil servants will have access to Rights Commissioners in relation to all types of grievances which they don’t have now.

Decentralisation
The principle issue that has dominated industrial relations in the civil service for the past four years is decentralisation. The Association along with the other civil service unions meet on a monthly basis in the Department of Finance to discuss issues that are of concern and to agree on structures to accommodate our members.
The reality of the decentralisation programme is that everybody from the Taoiseach (past and present) down knows that there are aspects of it that don’t make sense.

In addition the OECD in its recent report made some comments on the decentralisation programme. They note that from the official reports of the Decentralisation Implementation Group that many of those opting to avail of the programme are staff who have already moved out of Dublin and who are working in other locations. This is not what was envisaged at the inception of the decentralisation programme. They also note that while there are 6,000 currently based in Dublin who wish to avail of decentralisation many of them have applied to over subscribed locations and it is unlikely that all of these applicants will be accommodated.

The OECD said and I quote “that while it had not reviewed the administrative relocation programme per se, it should be noted that the impacts of this programme as currently envisaged poses a number of challenges for the Irish Public service. Staff will be dispersed widely and many will be new to departments’ and that in some areas, turnover of staff who were opting not to relocate with their department or offices could be as high as 90%. In addition to the loss of expertise and knowledge, this presents challenges for management level staff (who in many cases are also experiencing staff turnover) to ensure appropriate training is provided so that business and services continue without loss of quality or effectiveness. This will impose additional specific pressures on the Irish Public Service, as compared to the public services in other countries, which in other respects, share the same challenges as their Irish counterparts”.

These were similar to the points the Association made when we published our two reports on Decentralisation. Last year we published a report which called for a review and now given what was said by the OECD and given what our experience to date has been there is now even a greater need to review the whole process.

We have stated previously that we are not opposed to decentralisation We recognise and welcome the benefits to the public and to our members of a well thought out and rational model of decentralisation. But the current programme has major flaws.

Decentralisation tags are being put on promotion within the civil service and members are taking promotions in these cases with a view to returning at some future date. The problems we see is that in the future there will not be enough vacancies in Dublin for these people to return.

It is more difficult for our members in semi state agencies because when the organisation moves, they have nowhere else to transfer and also the agencies have not enough volunteers to decentralise. If the review is put off any longer the Government will have created a mess where a sizeable minority of people have taken up jobs with an agreement to decentralise and have made arrangements to buy houses in decentralised locations and also a sizeable majority of people who have no intention of moving and will have to be fixed up with jobs in Dublin. The sooner a review takes place the sooner there will be agreement with Government on decentralisation.

**OECD**

The OECD were asked to examine the Irish Public Service and to

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1) benchmark it against other comparable countries

2) to make recommendations as to future direction for public service reform.

Firstly, let me say that we welcome the report. It states that the Irish Public Service stands up well when compared with Public Services in other countries. It notes that the numbers employed in the Irish Public Service are significantly less in relative terms than the level of public employment in Norway, Sweden, France, Finland or Belgium.

Although expenditure on the Public Service has also increased substantially in the same period, the OECD Report points out that much of these increases have reflected a need to play catch-up from historically low levels. Even when factoring in infrastructural investment, Ireland has the third smallest total public expenditure as a percentage of GDP, (third to Korea and Mexico). In comparison with other OECD countries therefore, Ireland has been able to deliver services with a Public Service that is relatively small given the size of the economy and labour force.

The Association will engage with the Official Side on the recommendations in the report.

The former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern has put on record as recently as last week and I quote “Throughout my political career, I have seen at first hand the quality and professionalism of our system. Of course, no system is perfect, but I have been struck, time and again, by the quality of the advice and service delivered by Irish public servants. They regularly outshine much bigger and better-resourced public service organisations in other jurisdictions”.

**Conclusion**

This is my first Conference as General Secretary. I would like to thank the officers, Ciaran, Peadar and Mary and the Executive Committee for their help and support over the last year.

I want to thank Brian Ingoldsby and Standing Orders Committee for their customary care and attention to organising Conference business and I especially would like to wish John Gordon who is retiring well. John has been a long standing member of Standing Orders. I want to thank Tom Quigley for his help over the year and a special thanks to Laura Noonan who has agreed to help us this year with the minutes with the assistance of Joe Brennan. I also want to thank the people with whom I work with in the Association, John, Jackie, Dorothy and Pat. Finally, I wish to thank Branch Officers and you the delegates for your help this year and hopefully for the years ahead.

I propose the Annual Report to the Conference.
Resolutions adopted 2008

RULE CHANGE

Resolution 1
That Conference amend Rule 9 (b)(1) as follows: The delegate conference shall consist of the Executive Committee, the Standing Orders Committee and accredited delegates elected by and from Branches in the numbers indicated below and notified to the General Secretary:

(a) Branches with 30 members or less – Two delegates
(b) Branches with more than 30 members - two delegates for the first 30 members and, thereafter, one delegate per 30 members or part thereof.

PAY/BENCHMARKING

COMPOSITE A
That this conference
(1) notes with dismay the discrepancy between the findings of the Review Body on Higher Remuneration and the Benchmarking Body.
(2) Instructs the Executive to ensure that in any future Benchmarking/third party pay review the methodology is agreed with the unions in advance and forms part of the agreed terms of reference.

Resolution 8
Given that the pay expectations of AHCPS grades have been seriously diminished by the outcome of the recent benchmarking process and in view of the fact that the impact of decentralisation has all but ended the promotional opportunities for many APs and POs, this Conference calls on the Executive Committee to lodge with the official side a claim for two further long service increments for both grades to be awarded Furthermore the period of eligible service for both the existing and new increments be reduced from three to two years. Service at AP/AP1 level to count as one for long service increments and similar for PO/PO1

FÁS

Resolution 11
That Conference instructs the Executive to communicate to FÁS the concern that members feel about their lack of consultation under Towards 2016 and the possible threat to future pay awards, even though we have been flexible and co-operative with FÁS.

SUPERANNUATION

Resolution 13
That Conference instructs the incoming Executive Committee to negotiate an optional scheme of retirement with immediate payment of full superannuation benefits for those members who are under 60 years of age and who have 40 years service or more.

Resolution 14
That Conference instructs the Executive Committee to pursue a claim, having regard for the anticipated surpluses at Principal and Assistant Principal levels arising from decentralisation, for the introduction of a voluntary early retirement scheme for members along the lines of the late 1980’s scheme.

DECENTRALISATION

Resolution 15
That Conference calls on the Government to urgently review the decentralisation programme given its adverse impact on the country’s public administration system.

Resolution 16
That this Conference instructs the incoming Executive to request the Government to establish urgently a rigorous independent expert review of the implementation of the decentralisation programme, to identify, in particular:

(a) the implications, in terms of efficiency and economy, of decentralising headquarters and related policy functions of Departments and of locating Divisions of Departments across separate locations;
(b) possible alternative approaches, as appropriate, to the proposed arrangements referred to at (a) within the overall parameters of the programme.

Resolution 18
That this Conference instructs the incoming Executive to request the Decentralisation Implementation Group to provide as a matter of urgency:-

(a) a report outlining: (i) measures to ensure that adverse impacts on work life balance do not arise as a consequence of decentralisation; and (ii) all likely practical consequences that arise for staff who have applied to the Central Applications Facility and for staff who have not applied for decentralisation;
(b) a 'Frequently Asked Question' information facility that staff can consult to obtain detailed information as to how the Group’s decentralisation proposal will apply in practice in the context of the questioner’s individual circumstances and a mechanism for staff to raise specific questions.

Resolution 19
That this Conference notes that the operation of the procedures for reassignment of staff from the “Dublin Surplus” is often leading to considerable delays in the filling of vacancies and calls on the Department of Finance to streamline the procedures in a manner that will ensure that vacancies are filled promptly.

Resolution 20
That this Conference calls on the Executive Committee to seek payment of standard mileage allowances and time off in lieu for the extra time spent travelling each day for staff who are required to undertake additional travel in own transport to and from home to work in a temporary decentralisation location as a result of the failure of a Department or Agency to secure permanent accommodation in the official decentralised location by the date set out in official decentralisation plans.

Resolution 21
Conference notes, with concern that in a recently determined case The Revenue Commissioners have been found by the Equality Tribunal to be in breach of Section 6 of the Equality Act on two separate occasions both relating to discrimination on grounds of age. This finding related to a case taken on the “Consistory” method of selection for promotion. Commenting on the case, Niall Crowley, Chief Executive of the Equality Authority, noted that most cases of discrimination on his records now related to age and said “All promotion processes within the civil service should now be reviewed to ensure they are open and transparent. A civil service wide strategy should be developed to promote equality for older employees and to support the effective management of age diversity” Conference endorses this call by Mr Crowley and directs the incoming Committee to seek practical methods of achieving effective management of age diversity.

Resolution 22
This ADC notes and welcomes strategies intended to ensure an effective representation of women at senior management levels in the Civil Service. In so doing Conference calls on the Executive Committee to monitor the impact of those strategies, and where necessary, to engage with the Official Side to ensure that they do not have the unintended effect of causing discrimination on the basis of family status or gender.

Resolution 23
This Conference directs the incoming Executive Committee to open negotiations so that the terms and conditions of the current Term Time arrangement may be extended to periods other than school holidays and for purposes other than child or parental minding duties.

Resolution 24
That this ADC instructs the Executive to ensure that in the event of the transfer of Community Welfare staff from the HSE to the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the interests of our members are safeguarded and that the current ratio of posts – PO to AP and AP to HEO – will also apply to posts transferred from the HSE.

Resolution 26
That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee of the AHCPS to demand that the Official Side submit the PPSN’s of all members to Revenue so that the Tax Credit for Trade Union Subscriptions can be allocated to all our members by Revenue without claims having to be made to Revenue by members.

Resolution 29
In view of the considerable extra travelling time between offices at separate locations imposed on members due to decentralisation, that this Conference instructs the incoming Executive to lodge a claim for “time in lieu” in respect of time spent travelling outside of official office hours.

Resolution 30
That Conference instructs the incoming Executive Committee to vigorously pursue a claim with the Official Side for an improved Annual Leave entitlement for AHCPS members in the light of increases in recent years of the annual leave entitlements for other grades in the Civil and Public Service, and asks that the Executive report to members on progress made.

Resolution 31
That Conference calls on the incoming Executive Committee that, following the ongoing rollout of decentralisation in many areas, the Association examine its administrative, policy setting and structural arrangements to meet the requirements of members in the new arrangements.

Resolution 32
That Conference instructs the incoming Executive Committee to examine and to report back to the next ADC in relation to fully employing Information and Communication Technology to enhance communication between head office and branches and to dispense with the need for paper based transactions for the purpose of proposing motions for conference or nominations for membership of the Executive.
REMITTED MOTIONS

SUPERANNUATION

Motion 12
Conference notes the most recent Benchmarking awards to our grades factored in a 12% reduction to take account of pension contributions. This Conference takes the very strong view that the pension issue for our grades is now dealt with and no attempt to further penalise our grades in terms of pay or pension adjustments will be accepted.

Revenue Branch

DECENTRALISATION

Motion 17
That this Conference instructs the incoming Executive to commission a detailed and comprehensive survey of all AHCPS members to:

(a) ascertain members’ views on the costs and benefits for the administration of central government, in the short-term and long-term, of the overall decentralisation programme, as envisaged in its entirety, involving the complete relocation of 8 Government Departments;

(b) ascertain the positive and negative impacts on morale and general engagement with their career and work that the decentralisation programme is currently having on members; and

(c) publish extensively or promote publicity in relation to the overall detailed analysis of the survey results referred to at (a) and (b) and also of the findings of the Executive Committee’s report of May 2007, Public Service Decentralisation – The Need for an Immediate Review, with particular emphasis on implications for taxpayers and customer service.

Environment, Heritage & Local Government Branch

HEALTH & SAFETY

Motion 25
This Conference notes that a number of findings on cases taken under the equality legislation, have had the effect of widening the definition of work place to include certain work related social events. As this could carry a potential exposure to litigation and liability under negligence and/or Health and Safety legislation, Conference directs the incoming committee to secure a Direction centrally on how Managerial Staff is to deal with this development.

Social & Family Affairs Branch

TAX CREDITS

Motion 27
That this Conference instructs the AHCPS to lodge a Motion to the ICTU Conference instructing all Unions affiliated to the ICTU to submit the PPSNs of all their members to Revenue so that the Tax Credit for Trade Union Subscriptions can be allocated to all members of the Trade Union movement without having to lodge individual claims.

Revenue Branch

Amendment
In the second line delete the word “instructing” and replace with “recommending that”; In the 3rd line after “all Unions affiliated to the ICTU” delete the word “to” and replace with “should request that their employers”

Enterprise Trade & Employment Branch

THIRD WORLD/CHARITY FUND

Motion 34
That Conference authorises the Executive, subject to receiving appropriate reassurance that the funds are being well directed, to negotiate an increase in the voluntary contributions from pay in respect of the Civil Service Third World Fund and the Civil Service Charities Fund from 0.001% (existing rate) to 0.002%, in view of the fact that those rates were agreed in 1980 and 1991 respectively.

Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs Branch

Garda Civilian

The Garda Siochana Act 2005 has seen a large increase in the number of civilian staff employed in An Garda Siochana. For general service grades there has been a change in the structure whereby they were previously staff of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform they are now staff of the Garda Commissioner. This has seen the establishment of a new civilian HR structure based in Navan, with a new Departmental Council involving the civilian unions, AHCPS, CPSU, IMPACT and PSEU.

Recently in an effort to widen the Partnership Structure in An Garda Siochana a seminar was held at Finstown House in Lucan with representatives of the civilian unions and the four Garda unions. This was the first occasion that both the civilian and Garda unions had formally met.

The seminar was chaired by John Leamy, Chief Administrative Office who is the senior civilian staff member in An Garda Siochana. The seminar was addressed by Assistant Commissioner Catherine Clancy, Peter Cassells Chairman National Centre Partnership and Productivity, John Butler of Century Management Ltd and George Maybury, Assistant General Secretary, PSEU and a former General Secretary of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, who was able to bring a unique insight to the seminar having been on both sides of the fence so to speak. The seminar was followed by dinner which was attended by the Commissioner Fachtna Murphy. The AHCPS was represented at the seminar by branch Secretary Kieran Downey and Deputy General Secretary John Kelleher.

The Branch are meeting with the civilian HR later in the month to pursue the PCW 1% uplifts.
Omega Launches New Investment Service to AHCPS Members

Omega Financial Management are delighted to announce the introduction of a new investment service for members of the AHCPS. This service offers a comprehensive range of investments with a particular focus on investment in secure style products which are guaranteed.

The last twelve months have been very difficult for investors. Losses on both property and stock markets have emphasised the importance of investing in products which are secure and where your capital is guaranteed. It is critical to identify which specific guaranteed product is optimum for your needs and critically where your investment can earn more than is available on deposit.

Secure Investments
Contrary to popular belief there are investment vehicles available that offer capital security to investors and can still offer excellent returns. As investment advisors we tend to recommend only capital guaranteed investments to our clients unless of course a client themselves would prefer to opt for a product with more risk.

Investing over Different timeframes
When constructing an investment portfolio it is also very important that investments are staggered and will mature at different times. A high interest deposit account is recommended in the short term. This will allow access to your money in the event of any unexpected expenditure or for that rainy day. The remaining funds would then be split and an investment term of 3 years would be taken with a proportion and a five to six year with the remainder.

A working example;
John and Mary have recently come into some money. John has just retired and Mary received an inheritance. Between the two of them they have €150,000 to invest. As their daughter may be getting married abroad soon they would like to avoid tying up all their money; they need to be sure that they can access their funds in the case of any eventuality. Despite the fact that neither are risk-takers they do not wish to have their money languishing on deposit.

Action;
Firstly they should open a deposit account in a Building Society which has a rate in excess of 5%. It is suggested that €40,000 is adequate which will leave them €110,000 to invest more actively. They would like to invest some for the medium term and as a result choose to invest €80,000 split between a 3 year and a 3 ½ year guaranteed equity bond.

Finally with the final €30,000 they choose a Consensus Bond over 6 years to balance their portfolio.

These secure investments give them a diversified portfolio with access to maturing funds over the short and medium term. They are giving their money the best opportunity to grow and giving themselves peace of mind.

For more information contact John O’Connor of Omega at 1850 260 261 or mobile 087 2345865.
AHCPS Executive Committee 2008–2009
Results of Election

**Chairperson**
Peader Carpenter –
Elected unopposed

**Vice-Chairperson**
Tom Allen –
Elected unopposed

**Treasurer**
Mary McLoughlin –
Elected unopposed

Executive Committee 2008/2009
Results of Election
There were 14 candidates for the 12 positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Branch</th>
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<td>116</td>
<td>Agnew Terry</td>
<td>Courts Service</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>181</td>
<td>Allen Joe</td>
<td>Environment, Heritage &amp; Local Government</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>Carney Tom</td>
<td>Education &amp; Science</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>Crosby Philip</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>Dunne Larry</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Faherty Eoin</td>
<td>Houses of the Oireachtas</td>
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<td>176</td>
<td>Holleran Noel</td>
<td>Agriculture, Fisheries &amp; Food</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>174</td>
<td>Hughes Eamon</td>
<td>An Post National Lottery</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>178</td>
<td>Hughes John</td>
<td>Enterprise Trade &amp; Employment</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Lehane Ray</td>
<td>Social &amp; Family Affairs</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>165</td>
<td>McKevitt Brian</td>
<td>Office of the Ombudsman</td>
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<td>173</td>
<td>Noonan Angie</td>
<td>Health &amp; Children</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>155</td>
<td>O’Gorman Anne</td>
<td>Justice, Equality &amp; Law Reform</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>O’Shea Bernard</td>
<td>Arts, Sport &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
AHCPS – Branch Responsibilities

DAVE THOMAS
General Secretary

Agriculture Fisheries & Food
Foreign Affairs
Finance
Health & Children
Marine Institute
National Centre for Partnership Performance
Oireachtas Presidents
Prison Governors *
Revenue
Royal Irish Academy
Taoiseach’s

The General Secretary will be available in relation to major issues in all branches

JOHN KELLEHER
Deputy General Secretary

An Post *
Arts Sport & Tourism
Comm. Rural & Gaeltacht
Courts Service
Education & Science (including ACELS, NCTE, NCCA)
Eircom
FÁS
Garda Civilian
Garda Ombudsman
Garda Inspectorate
Justice, Equality & Law Reform
Property Registration Authority
Legal Aid Board
National Council for Special Education
National Library of Ireland
National Museum of Ireland
Ombudsman
Prison Governors *
Road Safety Authority (RSA)
National Management Treasury Agency
Tobacco Control

* Dual Responsibility

CIARAN ROHAN
Assistant General Secretary

An Bord Pleanala
An Post *
Attorney General
Comptroller & Auditor General
Commission for Energy Regulation
Comm. Energy & Nat Resources
Commission for Communication Regulation
Central Statistics Office
Defence
Director of Public Prosecutions
Environment, Heritage & Local Government
Environment Protection Agency
Enterprise Trade Employment
Food Safety Authority
Food Safety Promotion Board
Health & Safety Authority
Irish Aviation Authority
Irish Water Safety
National Road Authority
Office of Public Works & Valuation Office
Ordnance Survey Ireland
Public Appointments Commission
Public Appointments Service
Pension Board
Personal Injuries Assess Board
Social & Family Affair
Chief State Solicitors Office
Transport