



Queensland Irish Association

Newsletter

September 2026

From singing and dancing to walking through history

Queensland Irish Choir Winter Concert

The Queensland Irish Choir performed (and celebrated) its Winter Concert on 25 July. It was very successful judging by the size of the crowd and their enthusiasm. It was matched by the performance of the choir and several guest instrumentalists who accompanied them.

In accordance with their tradition, the Winter Concert is a “musical excursion through the Celtic world”. The concert included songs from Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Nova Scotia, the United States and Australia, as well as Ireland.

There were many, many highlights in an enjoyable afternoon which included music performed by the Choir, two sets of solos by its members and a sing-along of well-known tunes.

My favourite of the day was “The Boys of Wexford”, a song commemorating the 1798 rebellion of the United Irishmen against British rule. It was equal parts the performance of the choir, not having heard the song for some time, the evocative back drop for the song and the accompaniment of guest violinist, Elizabeth Lu. I apologise to anyone sitting nearby for me singing along.

The Choir also performed a beautiful rendition of Highland Cathedral with Brendan Williams playing the bagpipes. Elleen Emmet sang Ewan MacColl’s “Schooldays Over”



Queensland Irish Choir performing their Celtic Winter Concert on July 25. More photos on page 8. Picture: Graham Moloney

about finishing school and going down the (coal) pits, another song that I hadn’t heard for some time.

The American contribution was “Drill Ye Tarriers” about the working conditions of immigrants, often Irish, building the railways of the United States. The line/s in the song about the driller docked pay for the time he spent airborne after being blown up were particularly amusing.

The whole concert was artfully directed by Musical Director David O’Keefe, with accompaniment by Tim Li, including, for “Raglan Road”, on the harmonium.

The Choir’s Christmas Celebration

Concert will be on Saturday, 14 November at The Hills Church at Everton Hills starting at 2pm. The program is on the Choir’s website at www.qldirishchoir.org.

The Queensland Irish Choir is the successor of the QIA’s Tara Singers and proudly carries on that tradition. Like the pipe band and dancers, the Choir incorporated separately after the QIA was placed in administration in 2015 but remains very much part of the QIA family.

The Queensland Irish Choir is

Continued on page 3

Calendar

30 September 2026

QIA presents O'Donovan Library Talk and Tour at Parliament House, Brisbane. 11am.

11 October 2026

Brisbane Celtic Festival, Moorlands Park, Auchenflower. 8.45am to 3.35pm. www.ccaq.org.au

16 - 18 October 2026

Irish Film Festival Australia at Palace Barracks, Petrie Terrace. irishfilmfestival.com.au

5 November 2026

QIA presents Samhain/Halloween Irish ghost tour of Toowong Cemetery, in association with Haunts of Brisbane and Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery. 7.15pm. Tickets: fosbc.au/tours/night-tours/

8 November 2026

Annual Irish Community November Remembrance Mass at 11am in St Joseph the Worker Church, Labrador.

14 November 2026

QIA Annual General Meeting, Wests Rugby Union Club, Sylvan Road, Toowong. 10am for 10.30 start.

12 December 2026

QIA Christmas Party, Wests Rugby Union Club, Sylvan Road, Toowong. 12pm.

16 March 2027

QIA St Patrick's Eve Dinner, City Hall, Brisbane.

17 - 18 April 2027

Queensland Manx Viking Festival, Allpass Parade, Shorncliffe. www.manxvikingfestival.com

First Friday of the month

Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band play at Friday Irish Sessions in Gilhooley's, Brisbane. See www.facebook.com/QIAPB.

Second Wednesday of the month

Tara Hall Dining Club, The Ship Inn, Sidon Street, South Brisbane. Contact Secretary Roger Thornton rjthornton8@bigpond.com or 0408 878 938

Last Saturday of the month

Tigh Gaelach luncheon at Easts Leagues Club, Coorparoo between February and November at 11am. Contact President Michelle FitzPatrick on mitchfitzpatrick@hotmail.com or 0403 384 223



Attending a Celtic Council of Australia (Qld) social gathering recently were Brisbane City Councillor Vicki Howard, fourth from left, who received her D Urr honour, pictured with Queensland Irish Association representatives, QIA Tara Hall Dining Club President Nigel Jeffaires, QIA Director Angela Laylee, QIA Vice-President Paul Hogan, former QIA President Jeff Spender and QIA Director Mary Allen.



Queensland Irish Association

Annual General Meeting



Queensland Irish Association Members

Join us on Saturday 14 November 2026

from 10am for 10.30am start at

Wests Rugby Club, Toowong

for our

Annual General Meeting

Wests Rugby Club, Sylvan Road, Toowong

From singing and dancing to walking through history

Continued from page 1

a non-auditioned, community choir which, if you are interested, meets on Tuesday evenings from 6.30pm to 9pm at the Toombul Shire Hall in Nundah.

Queensland State Irish Dancing Championships

The Australian Irish Dancing Association (Queensland Branch) staged the 2026 State Championships at Carbrook on 14-16 August.

The QIA continued a silver sponsorship of the championships and Vice-President Paul Hogan and I were on hand on Saturday and Sunday to present prizes in the sections the Association sponsored.

I had the distinct honour to present the QIA Perpetual Trophy to the winner of the Senior Ladies 22 years and over section, Mackenzie Cox from the Carolan Academy, and the prizes for the Senior Mens 20 years and over section to Matthew Malone from the Jackson Studio.

The QIA Dancers performed well too over the weekend.

I was never a dancer being diagnosed with two left feet at an early age. But I started going to Irish dancing competitions about the age of 10 when my cousin started competing, followed by my sister, Kate Hartley, and eventually my daughter, Cristin. So it was a pleasure, nearly sixty years on, to see so many young Queenslanders performing at such a high standard, and to hear the music again of the old traditional set dances.

As I renewed acquaintances with many current teachers who danced or taught over the years at the QIA, I was thinking about the contribution that the Association has made to the development of Irish dancing in Queensland and should continue to make.



Congratulations to QIA Dancers U12 Progressive Ceili and U12 Mixed 4 Hand Ceili teams who are the 2026 State Champions. Picture: [QIA Dancers](#)

Congratulations to all the dancers who competed in solo dances and teams over the weekend, and to the teachers and families who have supported them.

Quite apart from anything else, I always find junior sporting events like this to be a very effective antidote to the doom-sayers who constantly bemoan the failings of the younger generation!

Queens Wharf Precinct History Tour

The QIA teamed up again with the Royal Historical Society of Queensland (RHSQ) for a walking tour of the Queens Wharf precinct on 18 August.

I won't steal the thunder of Board

member Mary Corbett, who organised the event, other than to thank her.

The collaboration with the RHSQ is one that the QIA hopes to continue and develop in exploring the contribution of the Irish to Queensland society.

AGM Reminder

The AGM of the QIA will be held at West Rugby Union Club on Saturday, 14 November, commencing at 10.30am. We hope to see as many members as possible at the meeting to contribute to the future direction of the QIA.

**Graham Moloney,
QIA President.**

Torch-lit Samhain tour of Toowong Cemetery



It's almost Halloween, and after our very popular inaugural Irish Samhain cemetery tour in South Brisbane last year, we are once again teaming up with our friends at The Haunts of Brisbane and Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery to bring you our first Irish Samhain Tour of Toowong Cemetery.

Step between the worlds for a special Irish Samhain tour.

Commemorating a night when the veil thins and the living walk closer to the dead, join us for a very special torchlit journey through Irish-inspired folklore and the ghostly tales that cling to these stone-lined paths.

For centuries, Samhain has marked a time of endings and beginnings - when the harvest was gathered, fires lit, and stories told to honour the departed. Beneath the whispering trees of Toowong Cemetery, we continue that tradition, sharing chilling legends and uncanny accounts that echo Ireland's spectral past, from the bean sidhe (banshee) whose wails foretell sorrow to the daoine beaga (fae folk) said to wander freely on this liminal night.

Led by award-winning cemetery historian Tracey Olivieri and historical archaeologist-turned-paranormal researcher Liam Baker - in special partnership with the Queensland Irish Association - this one-night-only Samhain walk blends Irish folk tradition with Brisbane's haunted lore. Expect an atmospheric, spine-tingling experience rooted in history, myth, and memory.

No theatre. No tricks. Just true tales and timeless folklore told under the darkening Samhain sky.

This tour is not-for-profit, with all money raised going to cemetery history and maintenance projects. (PLEASE NOTE: This is NOT a theatrical tour).

Prices

Single bookings: \$20 per person/\$15 per concession.

FOSBC & Coffin Club members: \$10 per member.

Group bookings (four or more people): \$15 per person.

Tickets can be purchased at

<https://fosbc.au/tours/irish-samhain-toowong-cemetery>

Walking difficulty

Moderate (Grade 3) – Please be aware, given the aging nature of the cemetery, this tour involves walking [slowly] up hills predominantly over generally modified terrain [hardened earth, less than 1200mm wide], mostly clear of intrusions and obstacles. Please advise the organisers of any relevant medical concerns prior to attending the tour.

Duration

2 – 2½ hours [tour times can vary, depending on levels of customer interaction during the tour].

Age level

This tour is suitable for ages 12 years and up – it contains supernatural, murder and suicide themes.

Location and parking

Meet at the main entrance, corner of Milton Rd and Frederick St. Parking available in cemetery.

This tour is presented by Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery, under license from Brisbane City Council.



Queensland Irish Association

Toowong Cemetery Samhain ghost tour



Queensland Irish Association
with Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery
& Haunts of Brisbane
invite you to

Samhain Irish ghost tour of Toowong Cemetery

on Thursday, 5 November
from 7.15pm to 9.30pm

Prices: Single bookings \$20per person/\$15 per concession

Friends of South Brisbane Cemetery and Coffin Club members: \$10 per member

Group bookings (four or more people) \$15 per person

Tickets at <https://fosbc.au/tours/irish-samhain-toowong-cemetery/>

Ages 12 and up. This tour will involve two to two and a half hours of walking/standing.

Bring comfortable, enclosed shoes and clothing suitable for the weather.

Meet at the main entrance to the cemetery, corner of Milton Rd and Frederick St. Parking available in cemetery.

Discover O'Donovan's hidden library treasure

by Mary Allen, Director, QIA

There is a fascinating piece of Irish history tucked away inside Queensland Parliament – a remarkable library collection assembled and catalogued by an Irishman from County Cork.

On Wednesday, 30 September, Queensland Irish Association Members will take a closer look at Denis O'Donovan and the O'Donovan Collection, with a special talk about the Irish scholar who served as Queensland Parliamentary Librarian for almost three decades.

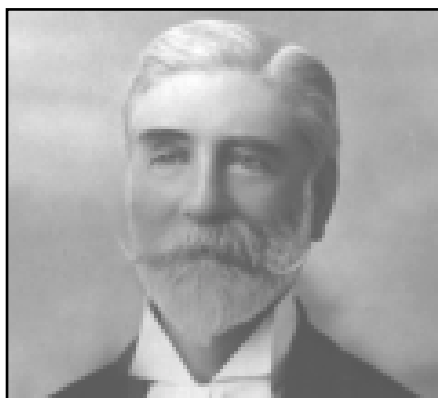
In 2025, The O'Donovan Catalogue Origins Collection was officially included in the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register, recognising its historical significance. The Queensland Irish Association strongly supported the nomination, championing the work of Denis O'Donovan, the former Parliamentary Librarian behind the collection.

Born in County Cork in 1836, O'Donovan came to Australia after an impressive academic career in Europe and was appointed Queensland Parliamentary Librarian in 1874. During his tenure he transformed the library, expanding its holdings from about 8,000 to 32,000 volumes and creating an extraordinary classified catalogue.

The O'Donovan Collection, which incorporates the original Parliamentary Library established in 1860, is a treasure trove of books, newspapers, parliamentary papers, maps and other historic material. Its subjects range widely from travel, geography, biography, science and history to literature, political science, theology, law, art and philosophy.

Among its highlights are journals from the voyages of Captain James Cook, accounts of early Australian expeditions by explorers including Darwin, Mitchell, Flinders, Oxley, Leichhardt, Jardine and La Perouse, and remarkable early publications including a 1599 Spanish-English dictionary.

There are also major works on Australian natural history, a 70-volume set of the complete works of Voltaire and ex-



Denis O'Donovan.



tensive British parliamentary material.

The QIA talk will explore both the man behind this extraordinary collection and the Irish connection to one of Queensland's most important heritage libraries.

And afterwards, there's no need to rush home.

The talk will be followed by a BYO lunch at Strangers Restaurant inside Queensland Parliament, giving attendees the chance to continue the conversation over lunch in one of Brisbane's most historic settings.

It promises to be a particularly interesting outing for anyone with an interest in Irish Queensland, books, history, genealogy or the remarkable people whose contributions have helped shape the State.

The library talk and tour will take place on Wednesday, 30 September 2026 at 11am.

Places limited, Queensland Irish Association Members (plus one) only with strict RSVP stating membership number by 23 September to functions@queenslandirish.com.au.



Queensland Irish Association

O'Donovan Library Talk and Tour



Queensland Irish Association

invites QIA Members to

O'Donovan Library Talk and Tour, Parliament House, Brisbane

on Wednesday, 30th September

at 11am

followed by BYO lunch at Strangers' Restaurant

*Places limited with strict RSVP, stating membership number,
by 23rd September to functions@queenslandirish.com.au.*

Members may bring a plus one.

Queensland Irish Choir Celtic Winter Concert



The Queensland Irish Choir performing their Celtic Winter Concert on Saturday, 25 July at Hills Church in Everton Hills. Pictures: Graham Moloney



Celtic Council of Australia (Queensland) Inc
ABN 83 434 304 383

proudly presents

2026 CCAQ



BRISBANE CELTIC FESTIVAL

Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, Brisbane

Sunday 11 October 2026 8.45am to 3.30pm



WHAT'S ON

Celtic Music and Dance from the Eight Celtic Nations,
Massed Pipe Bands
Kids Celtic Games
Tartan Clothes, Kilts: please wear yours
Prizes: Best Celtic Dressed Man, Woman, Boy & Girl
Australian Scottish Community Qld Inc - International Tartan Day

**FREE
ADMISSION**

WHAT TO BRING

Hats, Umbrellas, Chairs/Blanket, Water and Picnic Lunch if desired.
Light Refreshments available from food vans on site. Variety of vendor tents.

HOW TO GET THERE

Train: Auchenflower Train Station
Bus: Coronation Drive, such as routes 444 or 445. Get off at a stop near Land St or Wesley Hospital
CityCat Ferry: Get off at Regatta Hotel

Information contact



CCAQ President:
Mavis Williams CyC
email:
mkw.pinklady.dua@hotmail.com
Phone: 07 3849 8271



**Standing Stones
Celtic Nations Monument**

Proudly sponsored by



QIA Queens Wharf Precinct Walking Tour



On 18 August, QIA members joined the Royal Historical Society of Queensland for a fascinating two-hour guided walk through the Queen's Wharf precinct. Organised by Mary Allen and led by guides Fiona and Lisa, the tour explored Brisbane's early convict settlement, immigration and community life, taking in historic sites including the Commissariat Store, former Immigration Depot, Government Printing Office, the site of Pettigrew's Sawmill, Queensland Parliament House, the Queensland Club, Treasury Hotel and Queens Gardens, bringing to life the people and events that helped shape Brisbane. Pictures: Mary Allen



From museum basement to pioneer Queensland farmer

By Mary Allen, Director, QIA

Few Irish-Australian migration stories begin in such unusual surroundings as Hugh Mahoney's.

Before he became a Queensland pioneer, Hugh Harvest Mahoney spent more than a decade living with his family in a cramped, cold, dark basement beneath a museum.

Hugh was born in about 1800 in County Cork, Ireland and like many Irish at that time, moved to Wales in search of work.

From 1841, the Irish-born immigrant, his wife Elizabeth and their growing family called the basement of Swansea Museum home, sleeping in cramped bunks in dark stone archways. While visitors strolled through exhibitions upstairs, the Mahoneys ate, slept and raised their children in a series of dark stone-vaulted chambers below ground.

Today, Swansea Museum is celebrated as the oldest museum in Wales. In the 1840s and 1850s, however, part of the building also served as accommodation for its caretaker, Hugh Mahoney.

The rooms under the museum were officially described as apartments, but surviving basement vaults reveal a far harsher reality. Thick stone walls, low ceilings, little natural light and cramped sleeping quarters made for difficult living conditions. As the family expanded, space became increasingly scarce. The children slept in bunks tucked into the arches while the sounds of Swansea's busy waterfront echoed through the building above.

In March 1841 he was [appointed](#) keep and sub-curator at the brand



Swansea Museum today. Picture: www.swanseamuseum.co.uk

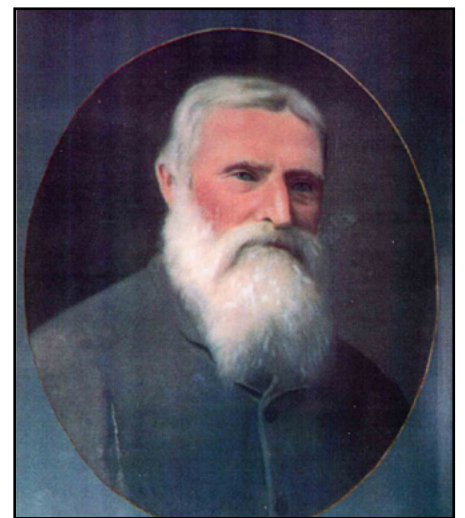
new building which today is Swansea Museum, "at a salary of 20/- per week with coal and candles".

For fifteen years Mahoney faithfully carried out his duties. He cleaned the museum, maintained the building, cared for its collections and acted as caretaker for one of Swansea's most important public institutions. The building was the headquarters of The Royal Institution of South Wales, a private club hosting some of the most powerful men in Wales. Hugh's hours were long and his pay was modest, and the family relied heavily on the accommodation provided.

Hugh was respected and praised for his intelligence and good conduct, according to reports.

Then in 1850, disaster struck.

Financial pressures engulfed the institution during the 1850s. As expenses were scrutinised, Mahoney found himself caught in a bitter dispute. He lost his position after accusations emerged concerning missing money. The dismissal destroyed the family's livelihood. The former caretaker found him-



A portrait of Hugh Mahoney.

Picture: [Wikitree](#)

self bankrupt, unemployed, publicly embarrassed and struggling to support a large household.

For a man whose family lived in employer-provided accommodation, losing his job meant losing his home as well.

Faced with mounting debts and dwindling prospects, Mahoney made a decision that countless Irish families of the era also confronted: he would start again on

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From museum basement to pioneer Queensland farmer



The basement of Swansea Museum where Hugh Mahoney and his family lived in cramped conditions. Pictures: [Swansea Scoop](#)

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the other side of the world.

In 1857, Hugh, Elizabeth and seven children boarded a vessel bound for Australia.

The voyage was anything but easy.

Nineteenth-century emigrant journeys could take three or four months. Families endured cramped quarters, storms, disease and constant uncertainty. For the Mahoneys, the journey brought tragedy, adding further hardship to an already difficult chapter in their lives.

The family left from Liverpool on 27 August 1852, aboard the *America*. Elizabeth was pregnant and went into labour on about 7 September. Neither she nor the child survived.

Hugh and his surviving children, Honora, Ellen, Elizabeth, Catherine, Hugh, Thomas and John, arrived in the new and remote colony of Moreton Bay on 10th January 1853. They were therefore amongst the earliest generations of free settlers in the Brisbane region. Hugh had it recorded that his wife had been “badly treated” and the ship was the subject of two newspaper articles concerning numerous problems. There was a shortage of

provisions, and the doctor was the subject of numerous complaints, especially concerning his abusive conduct towards people and his being drunk. The boat also had a defective mast.

The *Moreton Bay Courier* of Saturday, 5 Mar 1853, published: “THE SHIP “AMERICA.”

‘To the Editor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*.

‘Sir, (Log Extracts) - The particulars of our treatment in the ship *America* were so many that to give a correct account of all the cases of cruelty that were endured would be impossible.

A Mr Hugh Mahoney, who is now with his children in the depot, had his bed and bed clothes taken away by the Doctor as soon as he came on board the ship. The doctor put them into the hospital. Other clothes for the berths were in the berth before he came, and had been slept on for about a week. These beds were afterwards found to be in a filthy condition. They were thrown overboard. Mr Mahoney had an altercation with the Captain about these beds and ever afterwards on the passage Mahoney suffered from an odium he did not deserve. About Sept 17th Mrs Ma-

honey was taken in childbirth. She informed the Doctor that she expected to be immediately confined, when the Doctor told her that if she was not confined in ten minutes after her admission in to the hospital, she should be locked up until morning. She was not delivered but was locked up - no one to attend her. The husband walked the deck all night - could not render her any assistance. The child was born, and lived a few hours. When it was dying, the doctor came and bathed it; but alas it was dead, as everybody knew. Through the ill effects of her confinement, this poor unfortunate woman, in about 11 weeks, died of pure want. The medical comforts were denied her; she only having 1½ pint of porter during her whole sickness, (which did her a deal of good.) The provisions were such as she could not take, and the medical comforts were denied her. The husband, now a widower with seven children - four of them very small ones - is left to make his way as best he can in a strange country. In consequence of the loss of the bed, which was thrown overboard, he had to sleep 11 weeks on a seat 11 inches wide, from which he fell several times, owing to the rocking of the vessel.’

After arriving in Queensland, Mahoney moved into the frontier districts south of Brisbane. The former museum caretaker reinvented himself as a bushman, cedar getter and settler. It was a remarkable transformation. A man who had spent years tending exhibits and sweeping museum floors was now carving out a living in dense subtropical scrub.

He eventually established himself at Coburg Creek near present-day Canungra and Wonglepong. Life there could hardly have been more

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From museum basement to pioneer Queensland farmer

Continued from page 11

different from Swansea. Instead of stone vaults beneath a city museum, Mahoney lived amid towering forests, rough tracks and scattered settlements. The district was still being opened up by European settlers, and daily life demanded resilience, resourcefulness and hard physical labour.

Mahoney kept diaries and records of his experiences, providing a rare glimpse into pioneer life in nineteenth-century Queensland. He became part of the generation that helped establish farming and settlement in the region long before modern roads and towns appeared.

His family prospered. Children who had once slept in cramped basement quarters beneath a Welsh museum became part of Queensland's pioneering story.

Hugh died in 1886. The Brisbane Courier of 4 Aug 1886 reported: 'It is with regret I have to announce the death of Mr. Hugh Mahoney, of Caningera Creek which took place at his residence on Sunday evening last. Mr. Mahoney was about the oldest settler in the district, having come to the Albert River in 1857. He followed the occupation of timber getter for years until the lands were thrown open under the Sugar and Coffee Regulations, when he selected a splendid property on Tambourine, on which he resided until his death. He was a firm believer in growing and manufacturing tobacco, and spent a deal of money and time in that pursuit. He reached the patriarchal age of 90 years and was quite active until a very short time previous to his death.'

He was buried on his own property at Coburg Creek rather than in a town cemetery. According to family accounts, his grave was unmarked. Three years later, his



Descendants of Hugh Mahoney at the opening of the Hugh Mahoney Reserve on 14 November 1998.

Picture: [Facebook Have You Seen The Old Gold Coast](#)

daughter Ellen Forrest was buried beside him after a fatal horse-riding accident.

It was a humble ending for a man whose life had spanned two hemispheres and several identities: Irish immigrant, museum caretaker, disgraced employee, emigrant, pioneer and Queensland settler.

Today, visitors walking through the cool stone arches beneath Swansea Museum may never realise that a large Irish family once called those rooms home. Fewer still would imagine that one of those occupants would leave Wales behind and help build a new life on the Queensland frontier.

Yet Hugh Mahoney's story survives as a reminder of the resilience

that shaped so many Irish-Australian families. From the darkness of a museum basement to the forests of southern Queensland, he refused to let misfortune define his future. Instead, he crossed the world and began again.

A reserve at Hugh's gravesite at Mundoolun Connection Rd, Wonglepong was named The Hugh Mahoney Memorial Reserve in his honour in 1998 and a group of his descendants came along for the opening. A plaque was placed on the grave site of Hugh Mahoney and his daughter Ellen. The road leading to the reserve is named Mahony Road.

Hugh's [family](#) continue to live and farm in the Canungra area.

Brisbane Celtic Festival returns to celebrate spirit of Celtic Nations

by Mary Allen, Director, QIA

One of Brisbane's biggest celebrations of Celtic heritage is set to return this October, with organisers promising another colourful day of music, dance, tradition and family fun at the 2026 Brisbane Celtic Festival.

Hosted by the Celtic Council of Australia (Queensland) Inc., the free community festival will take place on Sunday, 11 October, from 8.45am to 3.30pm at Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, surrounding Brisbane's unique Celtic Nations Monument.

Now firmly established as an annual fixture on Queensland's Celtic calendar, the festival celebrates the shared heritage of the eight Celtic nations—Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, the Isle of Man, Asturias and Galicia. Since its inaugural event in 2024, the festival has continued to grow, bringing together Celtic organisations, performers and families from across south-east Queensland for a day of culture, friendship and community.

Visitors can expect a full programme of live entertainment, with traditional Irish and Scottish music, Highland and Irish dancing, and the ever-popular Massed Pipe Bands filling Moorlands Park with the unmistakable sounds of the Celtic world.

For younger visitors, the Kids Celtic Games will once again provide plenty of excitement, with children encouraged to test their skills in traditional Celtic-inspired activities while learning about the cultures of their ancestors. The festival also continues its partnership with the Australian Scottish Community Queensland, which will celebrate International Tartan Day as part of the festivities.

Festival-goers are encouraged to wear their finest tartan or Celtic dress, with prizes awarded for the Best Celtic Dressed Man, Woman, Boy and Girl. Kilts, clan tartans, Irish county



colours and Celtic-inspired outfits are all expected to feature in what has become one of the festival's most colourful traditions.

As in previous years, food vendors and Celtic-themed market stalls will offer refreshments, gifts and crafts throughout the day, while visitors are welcome to bring picnic rugs, chairs and a packed lunch to enjoy in the riverside park. Organisers also recommend hats, water and umbrellas to ensure a comfortable day outdoors.

The festival's central location makes

it one of Brisbane's most accessible cultural events. Moorlands Park is just a short walk from Auchenflower Railway Station, several Coronation Drive bus stops and the Regatta CityCat terminal, making public transport the easiest way to attend.

When: Sunday, 11 October 2026, 8.45am–3.30pm

Where: Moorlands Park, Auchenflower, Brisbane. Admission: Free

For more information, contact CCAQ President Mavis Williams on (07) 3849 8271.

Celtic Council of Australia Queensland Brisbane Celtic Festival 2026		
ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMME		
8.45 AM: ENTERTAINMENT COMMENCES – Individual Pipers around grounds		
9.00 AM - 9.20 AM:	Scottish Country Dancers	Stage
9.25 AM - 9.45 AM:	Tom Kimmert (Celtic Musician)	Stage
9.50 AM - 10.10 AM:	Kim Kirkman (Celtic Musician)	Stage
10.15 AM - 10.35 AM:	Ceri Cory (Celtic/Welsh Musician)	Stage
10.40 AM - 11.00 AM:	Scotia Highland Dancers (Scottish)	Stage
11.05 AM - 11.25 AM:	Queensland Irish Choir	Stage
11.25 AM:	MORNING RAFFLE DRAW	
11.30 AM:	Cr Seal Chong Wah (Paddington Ward)	
11.35 AM - 11.55 AM:	Gregory Peatey (Celtic Musician)	Stage
12.00 Noon	OFFICIAL OPENING	
12.10 PM:	ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS – "Best Celtic Dressed"	
12.15 PM - 12.40 PM:	Moreton Celtic Fiddle Club	Stage
12.40 PM - 13.05 PM:	Massed Pipe Bands	(on grounds)
13.05 PM - 13.50 PM:	Australian Celtic Women (Celtic Band)	Stage
13.55 PM - 14.15 PM:	QIA Irish Dancers	Stage
14.15 PM - 15.00 PM:	Limerick (Modern Celtic Band)	Stage
15.00 PM:	AFTERNOON RAFFLE DRAW	
15.10 PM - 15.35 PM:	Ishka (Celtic Band)	Stage
15.35 PM:	EVENT CONCLUDES	

Cork creator brings dark Irish tale to Brisbane

by Mary Allen, Director, QIA

An Irish story of land, ownership, murder and simmering resentment is coming to Brisbane Festival in September, with Cork-born writer, director and choreographer Luke Murphy bringing his acclaimed dance-theatre work *Scorched Earth* to Brisbane Powerhouse.

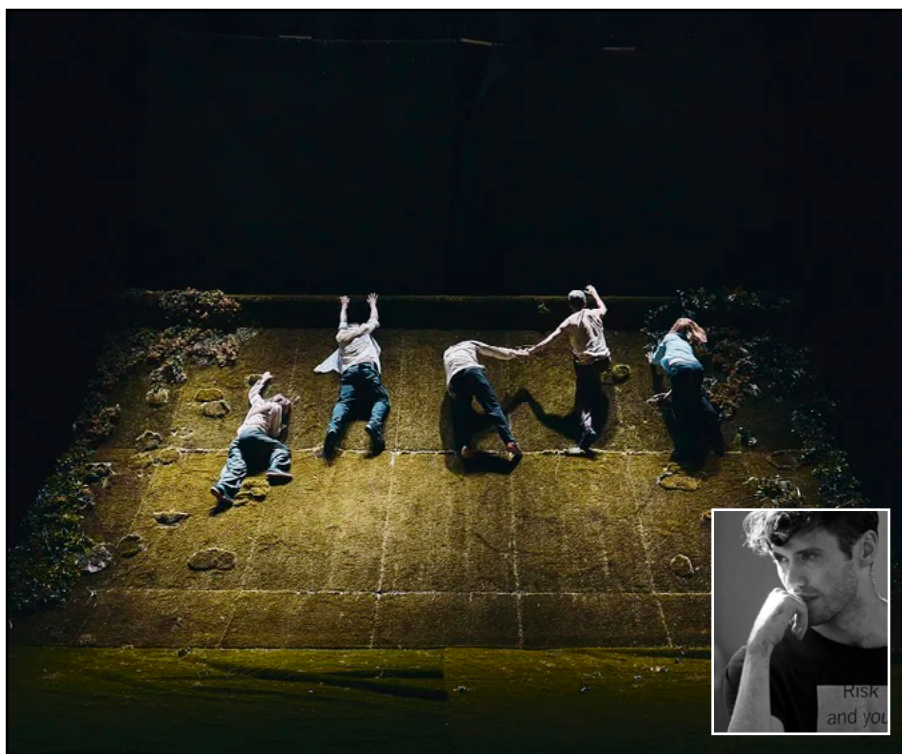
Described as part crime drama and part psychological thriller, *Scorched Earth* explores what Brisbane Festival calls “a dark but fundamental question of the Irish psyche”: what right do we have to the land beneath our feet — and what are we willing to do to keep it, or take it?

The starting point is unmistakably Irish. Murphy’s work is inspired by John B. Keane’s celebrated play *The Field*, the powerful 1960s-set drama in which land ownership, obsession and violence become inseparable.

But *Scorched Earth* is not simply a modern staging of Keane’s play. Murphy takes its themes and transforms them into a contemporary mixture of theatre, dance, physical movement and visual storytelling.

The story begins with a murder and an interrogation. A detective reopens an unsolved case 12 years after the crime, bringing a suspect back under questioning. As the two revisit the past, memories, fantasy, ambition and resentment begin to blur together. Five performers inhabit this unsettling world, with Murphy using movement as much as words to explore the psychological forces driving the characters.

For Murphy, the question of land has particular resonance. The work grew from a period when Ireland was increasingly focused on development and progress, while the question of how land is used retained what he has described as an almost gravitational



Scorched Earth and, inset, Luke Murphy. Pictures: atticprojects.com

significance. His development of the work included residencies and support in Cork, Galway and elsewhere in Ireland.

Murphy is himself a product of Cork’s vibrant arts scene. Originally from Cork City, he founded Attic Projects in 2015 as a company working across dance, theatre, film and installation. He has created more than a dozen dance-theatre works and has worked internationally as a performer.

Murphy’s previous work *Volcano* was a major success, winning four Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards, including Best Production. It also proved popular with Brisbane audiences when it appeared at Brisbane Festival in 2024.

Scorched Earth is his latest and largest work. It has already toured to Dublin, Galway and New York before arriving in Brisbane for its Australian season.

For Irish audiences, there is plenty here beyond the murder mystery. Beneath the thriller is a distinctly Irish preoccupation with land, inheritance, ownership, belonging and the old resentments that can linger between neighbours and generations.

And while Murphy’s production uses the language of contemporary dance, its roots are firmly planted in Irish soil.

Scorched Earth runs at Brisbane Powerhouse from 17–20 September as part of Brisbane Festival 2026.

Tickets: \$79.90–\$89.90.

Tickets: <https://www.brisbanefestival.com.au/events/scorched-earth>

There is also a free Brisbane Festival/ABC Radio discussion on 13 September, Talk of the Town: True crime, death and the live body, featuring Luke Murphy. Full details here: <https://www.brisbanefestival.com.au/events/talk-of-the-town-2>

Irish Film Festival returns to Brisbane with Chasing Millions

by Mary Allen, Director, QIA

Irish film is coming back to Brisbane this October, with the Irish Film Festival Australia returning to Palace Barracks Cinema, Petrie Terrace, from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 October 2026.

The Queensland Irish Association is once again proud to support the festival, having been a steadfast supporter for several years. QIA members will be encouraged to get along, support the festival and enjoy some of the best new Irish and Irish-Australian cinema on offer.

And the first film announcement has arrived – and it is a big one.

Opening the 2026 festival is *Chasing Millions*, described by the festival as the biggest Irish-Australian feature film in years.

The dark comedy takes inspiration from the infamous 2004 Northern Bank robbery in Belfast, when £26.5 million was stolen in what remains one of the largest bank robberies in British history. But this version brings an Australian perspective to the story.

The film stars Australian actor Madeleine Madden, alongside Christopher Eccleston, with a host of Irish talent.

Brisbane audiences will have the chance to see the film as part of an Opening Night Extravaganza, and join the film's cast and crew for a fabulous premiere event featuring live music, Irish food and drinks and plenty of atmosphere.

Irish Film Festival Australia shared: "Our Opening Night Extravaganza, CHASING MILLIONS, the biggest Irish-Australian feature film in years! Starring



our own Madeleine Madden, Christopher Eccleston, and a host of fantastic Irish talent, this dark comedy tells the tale of 2004's massive Belfast bank heist through a distinctly Australian lens. Join the film's cast and crew for a fabulous premiere event at Palace Cinemas in each of our five cities, with live music, Irish food and drinks, and craic at 91%!"

And there is plenty more to come.

The festival is currently revealing one film each evening, building towards the full programme and ticket launch on 10 September. Organisers say IFF26 will be their biggest programme yet, featuring numerous premieres – including a first for Irish-Australian film.

The Irish Film Festival was established in 2015 by Drogheda-born Enda Murray and has grown into a national event spanning five cities, with an online audience as well. It showcases everything from new Irish features and documentaries to Irish-language cinema, comedy, drama and films exploring the

Irish experience around the world.

For Brisbane's Irish community, the festival has become a regular fixture on the cultural calendar – and the QIA is delighted to continue its support.

Tickets go on sale Thursday 10 September. The full programme and booking information will be released through the festival website www.irishfilmfestival.com.au as films are announced.

***Irish Film Festival Australia –
Brisbane***

***Friday 16 – Sunday 18 October
Palace Barracks,***

***61 Petrie Terrace, Brisbane
Opening Night: Chasing Millions
Tickets on sale 10 September***

Keep an eye on the QIA social media for further film announcements – and, when the tickets go on sale, round up your fellow QIA members and make a night of it!

If you're not in Brisbane you can still watch the festival's online film program via ACMI from 8 October til 15 November.

Flowers, floats and a touch of Irish spirit in Toowoomba

by Mary Allen, Director, QIA

If you're heading to Toowoomba this September, make a day of it. The Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, now in its 77th year, returns from 18 September to 5 October, with gardens, food, entertainment and plenty of spring colour.

The highlight for many visitors will be the Grand Central Floral Parade on Saturday, 19 September. Starting at 10am, the parade will wind through the city with colourful floats, community groups, performers, dancers and marching bands, under this year's theme, Spring Adventures. The free parade is one of Queensland's great community spectacles and can attract crowds of up to 75,000.

There's an Irish connection too. The Darling Downs Irish Club regularly takes part in the Carnival parade, while the Queensland Irish Association Pipe Band has also been part of the musical procession, adding a distinctly Celtic note to the floral festivities.

And while you're in town, make sure you pay a visit to the Irish Club Hotel, at 80 Russell Street, conveniently close to the CBD and just



across from Toowoomba railway station. The hotel is operated independently, but the Darling Downs Irish Club has its own room there and holds regular meetings and functions at the hotel.

It's thoroughly Irish-themed, with a traditional Irish atmosphere, live entertainment and a substantial bistro menu. The hotel dates back to the 19th century and stands on the site of Toowoomba's first hospital, before becoming the Irish Club Hotel in 2000.

The Darling Downs Irish Club

itself has been bringing together people interested in Irish culture in the region since 1967, formally becoming a club in 1972.

So come for the flowers, stay for the parade – and finish the day with a pint and a good feed at The Irish. You'll find plenty of Irish hospitality waiting for you in the Garden City.

Contact us

We welcome content from Members and friends in this newsletter.

If you have news or an article you would like to see included, email the editor, our public relations officer Mary Allen, at mary@queenslandirish.com.au

You can also reach us through our website, www.queenslandirish.com.au, and on our social media pages.

Another great way to interact with QIA is by joining our Facebook [group](#), Queensland Irish Association Friends and Supporters.

Editor and designer: Mary Allen.

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Queensland Irish Association

Christmas Party 2026



QIA invites Members and Friends to an
Irish entertainment Christmas Luncheon

Saturday, 12th December from 12 noon at

Wests Rugby Club, Sylvan Rd, Toowong

Entertainment by Tom Kimmet
Good food and beverages available
FREE entry and all are welcome!



RSVP to Mavis Williams on (07) 3849 8271