

From Dr Mary McAleese, former Chair of the Steering Group on Integration 2022-2026.

To Minister Patrick O'Donovan – Monday 7 September 2027

Cc to Alan Kelly TD chair Oireachtas Committee on Sport

8th September 2026.

I would like to update you on an important development in the ongoing work to integrate the GAA, Camogie Association (CA), and Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA).

Since receiving an overwhelming mandate for integration at the three Associations' Congresses in 2022, considerable progress has been made towards this goal. The Steering Group on Integration (SGI), a body representing all three associations and mandated by them to prioritise integration, working collaboratively and advancing only by unanimous agreement, has undertaken extensive consultation, including independent research involving more than 30,000 members. It has overseen detailed planning work across governance, balanced code representation, membership, facilities, fixtures, finance, staffing, player welfare, games development and an extensive list of other issues which arise in the context of integration. The membership of the SGI includes the Presidents and Chief Executives of all three Associations.

In February 2024, the three Associations collectively committed to the objective of achieving integration by 2027. In Spring of 2026 the SGI launched a series of provincial roadshows setting out its proposed framework for integration and inviting responses. The views and concerns expressed were woven into an updated framework, agreed by the representatives of all three Codes at the SGI. All three Associations agreed, informed their members and publicly announced that they would each hold Special Congresses in October 2026 to facilitate the permissions necessary to create one membership of one association in April 2027 and the introduction of the transitional arrangements and systemic changes at all levels required to deliver full integration over the following years, including a comprehensive review after five years.

The GAA yesterday, September 7th, informed the Steering Group on Integration that, in its words "it can no longer commit to a definitive timeline" for integration. It wishes instead to "reframe what we mean by integration ... at the heart of this should be a focus on equity rather than simply equality". (Full text of GAA position attached).

This reversal in the GAA's position has serious implications for the planning and implementation work already underway across the three Associations and was rightly, if regrettably, described by GAA President Jarlath Burns as a "hiatus". The LGFA and the

Camogie Association are now taking the significantly changed GAA position to their respective management committees for consideration.

I believe it is important that you are made aware of this development and of the uncertainty it now creates around the formerly agreed and published timetable and pathway for delivering integration which was, until yesterday, on the verge of implementation beginning April 2027. For me, it raises serious doubts about the current GAA management committee's commitment to delivering integration despite assurances to the contrary. I have publicly echoed that commitment, on a number of occasions, including at two meetings of the Joint Committee on Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport.

It is my sincere hope that the integration of all Gaelic games will be delivered. It is the express will of the members of all three organisations and offers the prospect of an exciting, dynamic new chapter for all Gaelic games. The SGI has worked assiduously to find answers to all the genuine concerns and roadblocks to integration raised over its long deliberations.

However, since the SGI's previously agreed comprehensive roadmap for integration has now effectively been blocked, with no alternatives offered, I find myself unable to continue as Independent Chair and have notified the members of the Steering Group on Integration of my resignation with immediate effect.