



# 'National Infrastructure Delivery Agency is necessary'

The President of The Royal **Institute of the Architects** of Ireland, Carole Pollard, has called for the creation of a National Infrastructure Delivery Agency as part of recommendations made in an RIAI report entitled, "A national infrastructure strategy for Ireland" to be launched at the Institute's 2016 annual conference with the theme; Relevance, Resilience and Reach.

With a legacy in Ireland of poor long-term planning, which has contributed to shortage of key residential, transport and healthcare infrastructure, the RIAI is concerned that, without proper oversight of the planning, procuring, design and delivery of projects on a sequenced basis, that mistakes of the past will be repeated.

As part of the report's key findings, the RIAI recommends the creation of a National Infrastructure Delivery Agency, to monitor data to inform changes to population density, economic growth and the stock of existing infrastructure and thereby provide an optimal level of investment and ensure that investment

is efficiently delivered in key areas such as: transport infrastructure; educational buildings; healthcare; housing; and the rollout of public projects.

The RIAI report highlights the range of datasets available which model movements in key demographic areas predicting future needs in education, housing and healthcare. For instance, it is now known that by 2025 second level enrolments are expected to be in excess of 400,000 pupils for the first time in the history of the State. This will trigger a greater need for third level education facilities from 2030 and resultant accommodation needs as this population cohort enters the house for-

mation stage. Looking beyond that, in the context of healthcare and housing delivery those over 65 years of age are expected to number 1.4 million by 2046, almost three times the current 530,000 in that age bracket.

By utilising this data the right type of infrastructure and facilities can be built in the right locations, for the communities that need them ahead of time.

Addressing members of the RIAI and key stakeholder in the planning and construction sectors Carole Pollard, President of the Royal **Institute of the Architects** of Ireland said: "When the scale of demographic changes on the horizon are so obvious for all to

see such as a near 200% increase in the population of over 65s within the next 30 years, it should serve as a stark reminder that unless we plan now for the needs of Ireland's changing population we will merely replicate ill-informed and poor decisions of the past. We face a choice of being in control of our own destiny or at the mercy of boom and bust cycles that have been so damaging to creating sustained progress in this country. There is an imperative to act, and to act now. We have experience of lessons from misadventures in planning and we have the data to inform our future needs. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to do so."



Pictured attending Conradh na Gaeilge's progress & information sessions in Buswells Hotel were (l-r) Ursula Ní Shabhaois; Senator Lorraine Clifford-Lee; and Julian de Spáinn, General Secretary of Conradh na Gaeilge.