



Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland

Embassy of Ireland, Ottawa

2021 Annual Report – Mission Operations,
Outreach, and Significant Events

January 2022

The Embassy of Ireland continues to work on understanding the true experiences of Canada's Indigenous communities, and fully supports progress towards justice and reconciliation.

FOREWORD

Dear Director General,

I am delighted to present the second annual report from the Embassy Ottawa. It provides an overview of the year, compiles the data of the Embassy's activities, and reports on significant events during 2021.

Best regards,

Eamonn McKee

Ambassador

Ottawa

January 2022

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OVERVIEW

I am delighted to present our second annual report for the Embassy and the Consulate General Vancouver.

We ended 2021 pretty much where we ended 2020. The pandemic proved to be resilient with much anxiety about travel and socializing around the holiday season. The Omicron variant meant a return to working from home but - veterans as we have become at this, it was less novel and less disruptive. Despite this setback, science kept providing reassuring responses as we learned to live and deal with the Covid-19 virus. Throughout the year, we continued to plan for the future and initiate projects on whose progress we will report in 2022. This and the effective public health measures against the virus sustained and renewed our sense of purpose and direction.

We used the time of lockdown and stay-at-home orders to reflect on what we wanted to achieve over the next five to ten years. We drew from the *Global Ireland Strategy* to consider the commitments that applied to Canada. We distilled our goals into five pillars that guide our implementation of the Strategy: Political-Thematic, Economic Promotion, Public Diplomacy, Research/Education/Skills, and Irish Abroad Services. They may seem self-evident but often doing what is obvious is the key to success.

We have learned over the year that we are on the right track. We know this because we have developed new projects to realise specific goals under each pillar. The positivity and energy of our partners and stakeholders in response to our ambitions were enormously encouraging. If we follow the energy of the Irish in Canada and our friends across this great country, our course will stay true. Team Ireland and the shared enthusiasm of our colleagues in the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland, and Bord Bia provide an invaluable platform here for our overall impact on Canada and bilateral relations generally. There is great energy about the relationship between Ireland and Canada, a sense that we share so much heritage and so many values and interests that the future is very bright indeed.

The metrics in this report speak for themselves: 145 events, 21 greenings for SPD, 38 Political Reports back to Iveagh House, almost \$500,000 dispensed in Emigrant Support Programme funding, 968,000 twitter impressions, along with the issuance of visas and passports, and handling 18 complex consular cases requiring notification to HQ.

We have enjoyed the support of the Department at home, under our new Secretary General Joe Hackett. To give one significant example, we now have sanction to hire a dedicated Cultural Attaché at the Embassy. Even more significantly, the Government has approved the establishment of a Consulate General in Toronto. This will transform our presence in the city and act as a catalyst for a new era in our bilateral relations. With the Consulate in Vancouver under the leadership of Frank Flood, supported by Jennifer Bourke and then Adam Duffy, we have never been stronger in Canada.

With the easing of travel restrictions and public health concerns, I was finally able to undertake official visits to Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax. The programmes and the response from the communities and our friends were terrific. We had the benefit of Minister of State for Enterprise, Robert Troy T.D. to lead, and enhance the impact of, our visit to Toronto. To all those involved, including the State Agencies, a sincere thank you.

I would like to pay tribute to John Boylan, our Deputy Head of Mission, Anderson Finlay who returned to HQ after an impactful tour here, and to Sally Bourne who has joined us. Along with a committed local staff team, we have rolled with the pandemic punches, kept the show on the road, and progressed toward our ambitious goals.

I also want to pay tribute to our Honorary Consuls and thank them for their tireless work and support and indeed their passionate advocacy of all things Irish. I would like to pay a sincere tribute to Doodie Cahill who retired as a much-loved and respected Honorary Consul. She has been an inspiring representative both of the Irish Community and of the Government.

To the Irish community, I say that without you, our presence here would be shallow indeed, our ambitions limited, our pride that much smaller. With you, we power ahead strengthening our presence here and building the relationship with home. I could see this directly during the celebration of Irish Heritage Month, sponsored by James Maloney MP and enthusiastically endorsed by the Parliament of Canada. Even though St Patrick's Day was necessarily in the main virtual, there was tremendous energy about the celebrations. I could feel the pride and enthusiasm in my study as I shifted between events in Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa.

These celebrations and the programmes sparked by my visits to Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax also reflected the life-long commitment and influence of our Honorary Consuls, community leaders, organisation members, and the academics and students in the Irish studies programmes across Canada.

It was an honour to witness Canadian democracy in action with the general election. It was a great opportunity for the team and me to familiarise ourselves with the constituencies and the process, as well reminding us of the how both Canada and Ireland found their paths to freedom and independence. Those paths have left legacies of triumph but also of tragedies that have over the past year called on both Ireland and Canada to engage, recompense, and commemorate.

Next year, I will have the honour to present our third annual report from the Embassy in its new chancery and with news from our Consulates General in Vancouver and Toronto. Pandemic or no, we have had a great year and look forward to another year of progress.

Eamonn

Eamonn McKee

Ambassador

Embassy Ottawa

31 January 2022



Ambassador Eamonn McKee¹

¹ Photo by Sam Garcia, *The Hill Times*. All other photos taken by Embassy staff unless otherwise indicated.

STRATEGY, BUSINESS PLANNING AND PMDS

The Embassy continued the development of its *Plan to Implement the Canada Ireland Strategy (PICIS)* throughout 2021, resulting in the formation of some clear over-arching projects under the already-identified five pillars (Political/Thematic, Economic Promotion, Public Diplomacy, Research/Education/Skills, and Irish Abroad Services). The Ireland Canada Research and Exhibition (ICRX) project has an ambitious long-term vision to tell the story of the Irish in Canada. The Carlingford Project will significantly enhance the political-level bilateral relationship, while the Trinity Bay Project will identify and facilitate partnerships across the research and education landscape. Mapping and outreach will continue throughout 2022 to advance progress under each pillar, notably the identification of partners and establishment of projects. Our business planning process at year's end, in anticipation of our activities for 2022, incorporated and expressed the actions required to progress PICIS, with PMDS shaping the role profiles and performances of all our staff.

ACCOUNTS 2021

The initial budget for 2021 was €701,810, which remained the same after the mid-year review, and actual spend was €619,155.

There was an under-spend in several subheads including:

- Salaries, wages and allowances
 - A1CSALARY, A1CSOCMED, A1DSALARY, A1DSOCMED
- Travel and subsistence
 - All categories
- Incidental expenses
 - A3BANKCHGS
 - A3MISC
- Postal and Telecommunications
 - A4DIPBAG
 - A4LANDLINE
 - A4MOBILE
 - A4TV
- Office premises expenses
 - A6CHANRENT
 - A6ENERGY
 - A6MAINT
 - A6SECURITY
- Promotional support and accommodation
 - A1RENTALL

Some of the under-spending in these areas is a direct result of the ongoing pandemic. Due to the lack of travel, all categories in the Travel and Subsistence category were underutilised. The underspending in the area of salaries is primarily due to the lack of a housekeeper on staff from March until the end of the 2021 year.

There were over-spends in the following areas:

- Incidental Expenses
 - A3CARCOSTS
 - A3ELECSUB
 - A3PRINT
 - A3PROFOTH
- Postal and Telecommunications
 - A4POSTAGE
- Office Machinery and Other Office Expenses
 - A5CONSUM
 - A5DOCMGMT
 - A5LOWVALUE
 - A5STAT
- Office Premises and Expenses
 - A6CHARGES
 - A6MINOR
- Promotional Support and Accommodation
 - Q1PROMOTE

The primary over-spend was in A5LOWVALUE, and was the result of assisting Embassy staff in obtaining items that would accommodate work from home arrangements. These purchases included home office chairs, desks, and headsets. A5STAT included re-stocking of Embassy stationary items such as letterheads and envelopes. A6CHARGES reflects the increased cost of utilities in the city of Ottawa as well as the upgrading of the landscaping of the residence. There has been an increased outlay in both print and digital subscriptions to encourage ongoing education as well as social and political awareness.

STAFF

There are three diplomatic officers (A/Secretary, First Secretary, and Third Secretary) and nine locally engaged members of staff in Embassy Ottawa, including a Driver/Residence Manager and a Housekeeper. The Embassy recruited a Research Advisor, Consular Officer and Accounts Officer in the first quarter of 2021. The Embassy bid farewell to its long-standing Residence housekeeper, with a successor recruited and due to begin in early 2022. Second Secretary, Anderson Finlay, returned to HQ in August, and we welcomed new Second Secretary, Sally Bourne, to the team.

The Embassy's local staff also had their roles reconfigured, allowing for more flexibility within the team, more diversity in what staff cover, and more ambition in terms of what the Embassy is seeking to achieve.

OFFICE AND RESIDENCE ACCOMMODATION

Following an intense year of premises selection and lease negotiations, the search for a new Chancery in Ottawa was completed in 2021, with the lease signed on a new premises in November. The process of design and fit-out is likely to take a number of months given current supply chain constraints but the intention is to be fully operational in our new premises before the end of 2022.

Staff performed a much needed de-cluttering of the office area to get ready for the upcoming move into the new premises. A local company was called to remove old, out of date and faulty equipment and furniture. This exercise will continue into 2022 as we approach a move-in date.

As restrictions eased, the Official Residence was utilised in the second half of 2021 to host a number of small private gatherings, all of which yielded follow-ons of strategic importance for the Embassy's mission. A few improvements and maintenance projects were undertaken at the Official Residence in 2021 such as much-needed built-in bookshelves and storage in the Loft/computer area; bookshelves and storage units in the basement hall; new wooden panel doors for the Ambassador's study, frequently used for WFH and virtual meetings and lectures; and much-needed maintenance on a variety of internal doors.

The second floor of the residence as well as the domestic quarters were painted after 10 years of use. The hardwood floors in the domestic quarters were also refinished. A new gas meter was installed, along with new panic sensors. The main kitchen fire suppression system cylinder was replaced after its 10-year shelf life. A new CCTV camera system is required for 2022 and will be visited after the new Ethernet Network is installed (Jan-March 2022).

The residence manager also revived the wrought iron exterior patio furniture that was over 10-30 years old by refinishing and repainting the pieces. All exterior iron railings were painted as well during the summer. New exterior wall sconces were sourced and installed by the residence manager.



The Embassy celebrates signing the lease on the new Chancery.

PROMOTION AND OUTREACH 2020/2021

The Q1PROMOTE budget for 2021 was €45,000, of which €48,843.46 was spent.

Having implemented lessons learned from 2020, the Embassy lost minimal funds due to lost deposits from last minute cancellation because of the imposition of pandemic restrictions.

HLG Project Code	2021 €	2021	2020 €	2020
Our People	17,810.58	35.98%	3,680	23%
Our Influence	1,652.58	3.34%	2,181	14%
Our Values	68.66	0.14%	607	4%
Our Prosperity - Culture	20,784.87	41.98%	3,122	19%
Our Prosperity - Other	6,594.38	13.32%	2,824	17%
Europe	90.30	0.18%	1,182	7%
COVID-19	2,504.80	5.06%	2,543	16%

*All amounts shown are in Euro.

2021 BREAKDOWN

- Close to 36% of PnO spending was on **Our People**. This included community receptions and meeting with Irish community members.
- **Our Influence** included meetings and dinners with key contacts and diplomatic staff.
- **Our Values** included Remembrance Day and Air India memorial wreaths.
- **Our Prosperity: Culture** included costs related to St. Brigid's Day and St. Patrick's Day, as well as the EU Film festival.
- **Our Prosperity Other** included gift bags that were sent out in honour of St. Patrick's Day and Bloomsday.
- **Our Place in Europe** included EU delegation projects.

The **COVID-19** project code included all costs related expenses that were a direct result of the pandemic. These included work from home items for staff as well as the ongoing purchase of PPE for staff at both the Chancery and the Residence.

DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS REPORTS (DERS)

In 2021, the Embassy entered 145 events on the DERS system, significantly more than last year. Of these events, the majority were political, cultural or EU related events or meetings, followed by Economy, Trade (other), community, and government. Most of the events this year were online meetings, webinars, conferences/briefings or speeches/presentations. Due to the pandemic, many community and cultural events were held online as a way to engage with our diaspora. However, there were a few months when we were able to hold in person events and the Ambassador was able to visit Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax for the first time.

Category	No. of Events
Political	21
Culture	19
EU	19
Economy Trade (other)	18
Community	14
Government	13
Human Rights	7
Economy Science, Technology and Innovation	6
Economy Agribusiness	4

Commemorations	4
Security	4
Northern Ireland	4
Media	3
Economy Tourism	2
Economy Financial Services	2
Economy Education	1
Economy Aviation	1
SECCO	1
Conflict Resolution	1
Development	1

The above figures can be broken down further into the HLGs:



Ambassador McKee with Dr. Mark McGowan from University of St. Michael's College.

High-Level Goals – High Level Outcomes	No. of Events
Our Prosperity – Strong Bilateral Relations	46
Our Prosperity – Promote Trade & Investment	24
Our People – Promotion of Irish Culture	21
Our Place in Europe	20
Our Values	16
Our People – Support for Irish Diaspora	8
Our People – Successful NI Peace Process, North-South & British Irish relations	5
Our Influence	4
Our People – Delivery of Passport & Consular Services	1

2021 saw a gradual move toward more in-person events as restrictions were lifted in line with vaccination rates, though virtual events continued throughout the year. In terms of in-person connection with our diaspora, a number of events were possible during three ambassadorial visits to Vancouver (September), Toronto (November) and Halifax (December). However, restrictions to combat the Omicron variant meant the cancellation of events and ending of in-person meetings for the closing weeks of the year.

GLOBAL GREENINGS

In 2021, the following sites were greened for SPD:

- Niagara Falls (on both the Canadian and US sides)
- Casa Loma, Toronto
- CN Tower, Toronto
The Distillery District, Toronto
- Toronto sign
- The Cariboo Sentinel (newspaper) shop, Barkerville
- Giant Beaver Sculpture, Beaverlodge
- Calgary Tower, Calgary
- The Big Fiddle of the Ceilidh (Fidheal Mhor A' Ceilidh), Cape Breton Island
- Resurgo Place, Moncton*
- Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa
- Cabot Tower on Signal Hill, St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Mac the Moose, Saskatchewan
- The Big Nickel, Sudbury
- BC Place, Vancouver*
- Bloedel Conservatory, Vancouver
- Harbour Centre, Vancouver*
- Sails of Light at Canada Place, Vancouver
- Vancouver City Hall, Vancouver*
- Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver*
- World's Largest Hockey Stick and Puck, Cowichan Community Centre, Vancouver Island

*First-time greening



2021 Greening of Niagara Falls²

² Photo courtesy of Tourism Ireland.

CONTACT AND EVENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CEMS)

Implementation of CEMS continued apace in 2021. Embassy staff became more familiar with the system, and the discipline of entering contacts following initial meetings has become more of a reflex. Going forward, the priority will be to maintain this disciplined momentum, focusing on quality of input (associated notes of interactions, identified priority contacts, better use of #'s) rather than quantity.

The breakdown of contacts in the Embassy Ottawa CEMS is as follows:

Primary Sector	No. of Contacts
Regional/Local Government	66
Political	131
Need Sector	12
National Government	217
Media	80
Irish Community	264
International Institutions	19
EU	17
Economic	484
Diplomatic Community	219
Cultural	151
Consular	6
Civil Society	29
Administration	61
Blank	17
Total	1773

IRISH ABROAD SERVICES

PASSPORTS

Ottawa remained one of the busiest passport offices in the Mission network in 2021, although the numbers of passport applications coming into the Embassy reduced as more services moved online.

On 29 April, Passport Online expanded to include first time applications from Canada (along with Australia, New Zealand, and the United States). From May to August, most paper applications were returned to use the online service. Once the number of applications coming into the Embassy dropped, passport staff began contacting applicants to let them know of the online service and applicants were given the option of having their documents returned to use the online service, or continue with the paper application. Most applicants chose to continue with the paper form.

Year	New Applications Registered & Reviewed	Re-Submissions (Re-registered & re-reviewed)	Total Applications Registered and Reviewed	Applications Returned to use the Online Service	Passports Issued	Online Applications – Passports Dispatched Via Embassy
2021	336	112	448	68	407	61
2020	1132	535	1667	-	1060	25

VISAS

The Visa Office remained open during the year to process long stay visa applications, preclearance applications, and other visa applications that fell within the essential travel category. The Embassy saw a significant increase in the number of applications received at the Embassy following the resumption of short stay visa processing in September. By the end of 2021, all visa services had resumed and were being processed at full capacity.

Year	Applications Registered	Applications Withdrawn, Returned Incomplete, or Refused	Visas Issued
2021	213	84	113
2020	180	47	33*

*Note: An additional 50 plus visas ready for issuance in mid-March, 2020, but were withdrawn due to Covid 19.

WORKING HOLIDAY AUTHORISATIONS (WHA)

There is a reciprocal quota of 10,700 IEC Working Holiday Visas each year between Ireland and Canada. While Ireland fills the quota each year, it is rare for the number of Canadian applicants to the programme to reach 500. Our Canadian counterparts are not overly concerned by this imbalance, as there is an understanding that travel outside Canada is not part of Canadian culture. However, given the current state of stasis, the Embassy will focus on encouraging more uptake from Canadians through targeted outreach campaigns.

Year	WHAs Issued
2021	28
2020	80

WHAs resumed processing on 1 November 2021. At that time, there were approximately 60 applications in queue to be processed. Applicants were contacted and informed that processing had resumed and were advised of what updated documents they needed to provide. By year's end, 28 WHAs had been issued, two of which were re-issues from applicants who were unable to travel due to the pandemic. In order to give reasonable time to work through the applications in queue, a 4-6 week processing time was established. This turnaround time was communicated to current and new applicants.

CABHAIR CASES

As travel restrictions ebbed and flowed, 2021 was once again an extremely busy year for all staff on phones and emails. Due to the introduction of an excellent in-house repository of travel information, many of these could be resolved during initial contact. Those that needed further attention were entered on the Cabhair case management system. In total, we had 18 difficult or complex cases in 2021.

2020	2021
43	22

EMIGRANT SUPPORT PROGRAMME FUNDING

The Emigrant Support Programme was extremely well-subscribed this year, with \$492,659 in funding distributed to organisations across Canada (excluding additional funding released in Vancouver by the Consulate for organisations there). This is an increase of 17% on last year's ESP funding. The programme received applications from several new organisations and continues to provide essential supports to organisations across Canada, including those that supported some of our most vulnerable citizens through pandemic restrictions in 2021.

TEAM IRELAND

In order to build on excellent existing relationships, and intensify the Team Ireland approach in Canada, Local Market Team meetings were held monthly throughout 2021. The meetings provided an opportunity to brief the resident state agencies in Canada (Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Tourism Ireland), as well as Bord Bia in New York and our North American Agriculture and Trade Attachés in Washington, on the Embassy's evolving long-term vision and more immediate upcoming events. The meetings also allowed the Embassy to be briefed on upcoming campaigns/events of the state agencies, and a number of opportunities for contributing to their respective objectives were realised as a result. In all, the increased and regular interaction has resulted in a much stronger Team Ireland approach in Canada, while simultaneously ensuring cohesiveness with broader HQ strategies in Ireland.

Enterprise Ireland officially began operations in Montreal in 2021, while its Country Manager in Canada, Neil Cooney, was replaced in June by Lydia Rogers, whose impact was felt most positively in the second half of the year. The IDA, under Deirdre Moran, recruited an additional officer in November for its Toronto Office, and both EI and the IDA facilitated a very successful inward ministerial visit (the first since March 2020) in November, of Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Robert Troy TD.

EMBASSY REPORTING

Sending Political Reports back to national capitals is a time-honoured tradition in all foreign services. They are a discipline, compelling officers to step back and analyse what is happening in their countries of accreditation. They are exercises in the craft of writing and the Department had some legendary writers whose reports were avidly read. PRs provide a view to inform Dublin of matters that affect our understanding of the country and the implications for our bilateral relationship and national interests. Embassy Ottawa filed 38 such reports in 2021, putting the Embassy at the top of the league compared with other missions, demonstrates the fascinating and complex range of issues at play in Canada today.

HONORARY CONSULS

There are six Canadian honorary consuls located in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, St. Johns, and Calgary (x2), along with one each in Nassau (The Bahamas) and Kingston (Jamaica). While the Embassy and Consulate stays in touch on a regular basis with each individually, 2021 saw an increase in collective information-sharing with the group. Plans for a regional Conference to be hosted in Ottawa were also finalised.



Ambassador McKee with Honorary Consul Eithne Heffernan and Dr. Mark McGowan during the Toronto visit.

IRISH STUDIES

The Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa carried out work on over 18 research projects that relate to the five pillars of the Plan to Implement the Canada Ireland Strategy. In 2021, the team completed 13 of these research projects and work continues into 2022. The Embassy conducted major work in mapping research, education, and skills sector in both Ireland and Canada to better identify potential bilateral linkages. This effort resulted in high-level meetings with five Canadian national research organisations. The efforts made to map the Irish in the five-valley region in Canada has resulted in the creation of the Ireland Canada Research and Exhibitions (ICRX) project. ICRX has drawn the local Irish diaspora, academics, museum curators, and regional business together to tell the story of the Irish in Canada to national audiences. Embassy research also identified 12 Irish studies programmes at Canadian universities, many with study in Ireland options. Mapping the wider Irish community revealed over 30 unique Irish community organisations that tie the many Irish Canadians back to their Island roots.



Embassy Staff at the Bytown Museum with Collections and Exhibitions Manager Grant Vogl and Visitor Experience Manager Steven Mattiussi.

INDIGENOUS CANADA

2021 was a particularly traumatic year for the Indigenous community in Canada. The discovery in May of the remains of 215 children on the site of a former Residential School near Kamloops in BC precipitated an outpouring of grief and solidarity across Canada, with federal flags flying at half-mast after the initial discovery until November. The discovery of further remains at the sites of other Residential Schools ensured the broader issue of Truth and Reconciliation remained in stark focus for the remainder of the year.

Amidst this re-awakening of the tragedy that was the Residential School system, a beacon of light emerged with the appointment of Mary May Simon as the first Indigenous Governor General of Canada on 26 July. There was further progress as legislation was passed harmonising Canada's laws with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in June, and Canada's oath of citizenship was also changed to include a new line acknowledging the country's treaties with Indigenous communities.

The Embassy continued its outreach campaign to Indigenous communities across Canada. Initial interaction with the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Gwich'In International Council, and Arctic Athabaskan Council extended to a number of more targeted interactions with a view to better understand the position and perspective of Indigenous communities in Canada and their relationship to the country.

SOCIAL MEDIA

TWITTER

The Embassy continues to build its Twitter following, with metrics improving incrementally towards the end of 2021. Noteworthy spikes were seen during and following the three Ambassadorial visits to Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax, displaying the importance of these in-person interactions in terms of our wider public diplomacy efforts.

The table below illustrates the trends throughout the year:

2021	Tweets	Impressions	Profile Visits	Mentions	New Followers
January	17	86.5K	2492	66	51
February	12	83.8K	1816	90	38
March	70	186K	5480	497	82
April	5	24.1K	1595	65	27
May	16	38.2K	2354	87	29
June	22	60.2K	3536	78	48
July	20	50K	8151	124	69
August	4	24.3	5464	97	33
September	8	15.7K	4178	89	59
October	15	200K	5226	109	64
November	39	107K	9323	241	67
December	32	92.3K	6125	171	46
Total	260	968.1K	55,740	1714	613

INSTAGRAM

The Embassy's Instagram posted 46 times, and had an additional number of 'stories.' The Instagram account did not grow as much as expected this year, largely due to a renewed focus on Twitter. The Instagram account was converted to a business account in December, which will allow the Embassy to track further metrics for 2022.

YOUTUBE

The Embassy's YouTube channel continued to be utilised throughout 2021, with 15 videos published over the course of the year (this includes both live and pre-recorded events). The channel increased its number of subscribers, from 210 to 311, and our videos generated 3,387 views. The most popular video on the channel was the "[St. Patrick's Day Greeting from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau](#)," followed closely by "[The Embassy of Ireland and the James Joyce Association of Ottawa Present: Readings from Ulysses](#)," and "[Keeping It Lit: A Discussion on Brigid's Roots and Feminist Legacy](#)." The Embassy garnered further traction from YouTube through appearances on other channels. The Ambassador's lecture on "[Ancient Gaelic Ireland and All That Remains of It](#)" has over 1,600 views.

VISITS AND SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

INWARD MINISTERIAL VISITS

- 31 Oct – 2 November, 2021 – MoS Troy trade mission to Toronto and Montreal.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 February, 2021 – St. Brigid’s Day virtual event. A fireside chat with Dr. Julie Le Blanc entitled “Keeping It Lit: A Discussion on Brigid’s Roots and Feminist Legacy.”
- 10 March, 2021 – The House of Commons unanimously passed James Maloney MP’s Motion to recognise March as Irish Heritage Month.
- 16 March, 2021 – First Newsletter sent using CEMS.
- 17 March, 2021 – Virtual SPD reception and Honorary Consul Roundtable with MoS Brophy.
- 31 March, 2021 – Co-Presentation of *Playback* with Irish Screen America.
- 17 May, 2021 – To mark International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOTB), a fireside chat with Cathy Murphy, Executive Director of the Irish Canadian Immigration Centre (ICAN).
- 27 May, 2021 – To mark International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers (29 May), a fireside chat with a former UN peacekeeper to discuss Ireland’s contributions to UN Peacekeeping.



Ambassador McKee with James Maloney, MP.

AMBASSADOR PROVINCIAL VISITS

- 22-24 September, 2021 – Visit to Vancouver.
- 31 Oct – 3 November, 2021 – Visit to Toronto.
- 12-14 December, 2021 – Visit to Halifax.
- 15 June, 2021 – In preparation (and as a teaser) for Bloomsday, the Embassy partnered with the James Joyce Association of Ottawa to present a video (filmed at the residence) of various readings from *Ulysses*.
- 16 June, 2021 – In partnership with the James Joyce Association of Ottawa, the Embassy presented another Bloomsday via Zoom.
- 29 June, 2021 – Virtual fireside chat with Patrick Murray from Irish Film Festival Ottawa to discuss 100 years of Irish film.
- 10 July, 2021 – The Embassy’s first children’s event. Saniya Chughtai from The Wadi Tribe launched *Tach Plays in Croke Park*, a book about a hurling playing turtle.
- 27 September, 2021 – Fire side chat with Sandra Moffatt from Tourism Ireland to celebrate World Tourism Day and to discuss Ireland’s re-opening and the must-see tourist spots.
- 29 October, 2021 – Virtual lecture with Tiber Falzett (Assistant Professor and Lecturer) from University College Dublin on the origins of Hallowe’en.
- 31 October, 2021 – A pre-recorded reading of *Have You Seen the Dublin Vampire?* By author Úna Woods.
- 12 December, 2021 – A pre-recorded conversation between Ambassador Eamonn McKee and Reverend Canon David Clunie about The Geddes Window at St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church.



Ambassador McKee and Reverend Canon David Clunie discussing the famed Geddes Window.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- Changeover of Second Secretary, with Sally Bourne arriving in August.
- Lease signed in November for a new Chancery premises.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS CANADA

Canadian hospitals were flooded with COVID cases in January, as PCR tests for incoming passengers were introduced, followed by mandatory hotel quarantining in February. Late-March and April saw variants run rampant, with hospitals in Ontario and Manitoba especially affected. A steady decline throughout May saw cases drop 70% in June from their April high. Borders were reopened to Canadian citizens on 5 July, followed by US travellers on 9 August, and international travellers on 7 September. A fourth wave hit in August, affecting Alberta most acutely. With vaccination certificate systems rolling out from September, on 8 November, non-essential traffic resumed in both directions across the US/Canada border for the first time since March 2020. The emergence of the Omicron variant from November prompted a restriction of travel from a number of African countries and tightened restrictions across the country.

The political year began with a small cabinet re-shuffle in early January, with Transport Minister Marc Garneau replacing François-Philippe Champagne at Foreign Affairs. On 20 September, the 44th Canadian Federal election saw Justin Trudeau's incumbent Liberal party elected for a third time, to form another minority government. On 26 October, the new Cabinet was named, maintaining a gender balance and naming Melanie Joly as Canada's fifth Foreign Minister in six years. Provincially, following wins for incumbent governments in Newfoundland & Labrador, Yukon, and New Brunswick earlier in the year, Nova Scotia's Progressive Conservatives secured a stunning provincial win in August, dethroning the incumbent Liberals who were seeking a third term but instead became the first government in six pandemic-era provincial elections not to be re-elected.

On 29 May, a mass grave containing the remains of 215 Indigenous children was discovered on the grounds of a former Residential School near Kamloops in British Columbia. This was followed on 24 June by the discovery of 751 unmarked graves in Saskatchewan, and more than 160 again in BC on 12 July. Federal flags flew at half-mast after the initial discovery. On 16 June, landmark legislation aimed at harmonising Canada's laws with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) passed third reading in the Senate, and Canada's oath of citizenship was changed to include a new line acknowledging the country's treaties with Indigenous communities. 30 September marked the inaugural 'National Day for Truth and Reconciliation', giving Canadians the opportunity to reflect on the history of Residential Schools and the negative impact they continue to have on communities.

Governor General Julie Payette resigned on 21 January, following the completion of an independent review of workplace harassment allegations. Canada then took an historic step on 26 July, with the installation of Mary May Simon as the country's first Indigenous governor general.

A blistering heatwave descended on BC, Alberta, Yukon, and NWT in June, with Vancouver police responding to more than 100 sudden deaths. Wildfires burned across the region, with Lytton, BC, becoming a tragic symbol of the fires as the entire village was burned to the ground. The fires spread across BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, forcing mass evacuations and having devastating effects on the regional economy. This was exacerbated by a further state of emergency in BC in November after the Lower Mainland suffered devastating floods that claimed a number of lives, severed crucial highways, caused widespread evacuation, and left thousands stranded.

As part of the US-led Earth Day Summit on 22 April, Canada announced it will cut its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40–45% below 2005 levels by 2030, while the Environment Minister tabled new

legislation to enshrine Canadians' right to a "healthy environment" into law. At COP26 in Glasgow in November, Canada signed on to a global pledge to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030, and co-published a Climate Finance Delivery Plan with Germany and Sweden documenting the progress developed countries have made funding climate mitigation in less-developed countries. Among other things, Canada also pledged to fund coral reefs, halt deforestation, and end international financing for fossil-fuel projects by the end of 2022.

Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig arrived back in Canada on 25 September after spending nearly three years in detention in China. PM Trudeau greeted the two men at the Calgary airport following a dramatic announcement the night before that they had cleared Chinese airspace. Their release came hours after news emerged that Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou was being flown back to China, following a deferred prosecution deal made with US prosecutors who had previously been pursuing an extradition request.

The Canada-led Declaration Against Arbitrary Detentions in State-to-State Relations was launched on 15 February, with 58 signatory states (+ the EU), while Canada's evacuation flights out of Afghanistan ended on 26 Aug, with 3,700 (out of 8,000 that had applied) having secured safe passage out. Canada subsequently pledged to accept 40,000 asylum seekers from Afghanistan.

On 6 June, a 20-year-old man was charged with terrorism after killing four members of the same family in a deliberate hit-and-run attack fuelled by Islamophobia in London, Ontario, prompting a national conversation around Islamophobia and xenophobia.

On 16 June, a motion passed to amend the Canadian Constitution to declare Quebec a nation, with French as its only official and common language.

ENDS



Top left to right: Ambassador McKee at the Pier 21 Immigration Museum in Halifax, NS; The Ambassador visits Canada Ireland Foundation's newest monument, Grasset Park, dedicated to the Canadian doctors and nurses who assisted famine survivors on their arrival in Toronto, ON; Ambassador McKee and Bob Chaulk, local historian, outside the SS Atlantic Interpretation Centre, Nova Scotia.

Bottom left to right: Ambassador McKee and Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston; Ambassador McKee, Deputy Head of Mission John Boylan, and Honorary Consul Brian Doherty with Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor, Arthur LeBlanc, and his wife, Mrs. Rosemarie Patricia LeBlanc.