

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chairperson Justice Laffoy's

Closing Statement

Sunday 11 June 2017

Good afternoon everyone. I would just like to say a few words before we wrap up the proceedings for this weekend.

We have had a very successful first of two meetings on our second topic, how we best respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

This weekend we have heard how our society is getting older, the options and systems in place to support people as they age regarding long-term care when it is required, and the experiences of both those receiving care and those providing it.

I would like to thank all our speakers again for their contributions this weekend. All the papers and presentations prepared by our speakers are available to view on our website, www.citizensassembly.ie.

I think you will agree that the situations we heard about this weekend are ones that we can all recognise and relate to. Either we have experienced it ourselves, or with our parents, grandparents, friends or neighbours. Ageing affects all of us. I think it is fair to say we all have a vested interest in making worthwhile recommendations to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

In anticipation of our second weekend on 8-9 July, we asked you what other aspects of this wide-ranging topic you would like to consider.

Many issues were identified in the feedback from members in our roundtable brainstorming session. While I have already given this, some thought I intend to reflect further on this in the coming days.

The Citizens' Assembly is a first and foremost an exercise in deliberative democracy and we must endeavour to base our work programme on the suggestions of the members. However, given the timetable set for our work by the Oireachtas, it will not be possible to cover every area which was raised unfortunately.

As you are aware the Assembly may choose to hear oral presentations from representative groups or individuals to assist in its deliberations. The Secretariat and I will look at ways of incorporating representative groups or individuals who made submissions in the agenda for the next weekend. Ideally, they could cover some of the issues you have raised.

As always, I have been hugely impressed by my fellow citizens this weekend. You have showed the same levels of commitment to the process and dedication as you did for the work which has gone before.

Finally, I would like to briefly refer to our next topic: how the State can make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change. The Assembly will consider this topic at its meeting at the end of September.

Tomorrow we will open the submissions process for this topic. Advertisements will appear in papers tomorrow and the Secretariat will be undertaking as much active outreach as possible to engage interested parties.

As always, submissions can be made online through our website or by post to 16 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

The submissions process will remain open until 5pm on the 11 August.

I would strongly encourage those with an interest in climate change to make a submission. This is another vitally important issue facing governments throughout the world.

As I'm sure you will have gathered from recent world affairs, it is very topical. I envisage our discussions focussing on tackling the effects of climate change and what types of preventative measures Ireland can adopt.

I will now conclude the weekend and wish you all well. Safe travels onwards and I look forward to seeing you all again in July.

ENDS