

Next generation – new horizons

THESE are undoubtedly very challenging times for most families living in this country. We are coming towards the end of the fifth year of sustained austerity following the government's adoption of the flawed policies of the Troika. This policy has seen nurses and midwives, other public servants, and indeed most workers faced with a mixture of pay cuts, pay freezes, additional taxes and charges, and longer working hours.

This sustained period of austerity and the continuing recession has placed increasing pressure on our public services, in particular our health service, which continues to be adversely impacted by the allocation of fewer resources and by depleted staff numbers.

The exceptional weather that we experienced throughout July was seized upon by all of us as a welcome salve to the current economic situation and the doom and gloom that has consumed the country in recent times. During this period I received an encouraging letter from a member who wished to pay her membership fee for 2013.

The member apologised for the delay in renewing her membership and advised that she had been paying her membership fee for many years and intended to do so for many years into the future. Closing her letter, the member stated that she was over 90 years of age and was aware

that nurses and midwives were going through very difficult times, but that by sticking together, she believed we would pull through them, as we had in previous generations.

This September issue of *WIN* contains a significant focus on the 1,560 new entrants to the professions of nursing and midwifery who will, this month, begin their four-year degree programmes. On your behalf, I welcome these new members and wish them every success, happiness and fulfilment in their chosen career.

We are all very well aware that our new graduates are emerging from college during a particularly difficult time. There is a shortage of staff nurse posts upon graduation, and the underpaid graduate programme is offered alongside the alternative prospect of emigration.

As our new graduates start their journey and look to new horizons, they bring the excitement, energy, optimism and dreams that will help to sustain our profession into the future. These new members will be the professionals who care for each of us in 10, 20 and 30 years' time as we reach the autumn of our lives.

Notwithstanding the pressures that all other members of nursing and midwifery teams are facing, it is imperative that we welcome our graduates warmly, provide them with every opportunity to listen and



learn, and help them to realise their full potential.

Despite everything, when I consider the encouragement, energy and vitality of our member in her 90s, and the exciting promise of our new entrants, I still feel that we are safe in their hands.

The next generation has arrived while the previous generation is still telling us that if we work together and stick together we will come through these difficult times.

Long-standing and new members are brimming with energy and we will just have to match them. Difficult? Yes – but not impossible.

– Liam Doran
General Secretary, INMO

PS. We intend to grant honorary membership to our senior colleague mentioned above.



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EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES:

WIN,
MedMedia Publications,
25 Adelaide Street,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co Dublin.
Tel: 01-280 3967
Fax: 01-280 7076
Email: nursing@medmedia.ie
Website: www.medmedia.ie

EDITORIAL

Editor: Alison Moore
Assistant Editor: Gillian Tsoi
Production Editor: Kennas Fitzsimons
Sub-Editors: Sharon Murphy
Designer: Lucy Proctor

ADVERTISING MANAGER Leon Ellison

PUBLISHER Geraldine Meagan

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Editor-in-Chief: Liam Doran

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INMO Journal Co-ordinator: Ann Keating,
Tel: 046-954 9315 Email annkeating@eircom.net

INMO correspondence to:

Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation,
Whitworth Building,
North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.
Tel: 01-664 0600
Fax: 01-661 0466

Email: inmo@inmo.ie Website: www.inmo.ie