



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027



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PRESIDENTS FOREWORD

This document is the culmination of almost one years planning, work, consultation and execution. The horizon of our Vision as members, is reflected throughout the goals and values of the plan. Our members have been at the forefront of informing, developing and delivering the roadmap for the next five years.

There is little doubt that goals set out are ambitious reflecting the ambition our members have for Macra. Our goals are focused. Focused on delivering on one of our main values. MEMBERS FIRST. All the way back at The National Ploughing Championships in 2022 when we launched our new Logo and new Brand, I used these two words to outline what Macra should be all about. The all-encompassing consultation which followed that has informed this Strategic Plan has delivered the exact same message.

The journey to delivering this new Strategic Vision and Plan has required many actors. From our Strategic partners Future Spark Consultancy, our Staff Team in Macra, our Membership, external Stakeholders to Board and Council it has been developed in partnership. A Vision for all. I want to thank each and every one of those actors for the significant role that they have played in developing this Strategic Plan.

Our members want to see a better Ireland, a brighter future where youth can grow and prosper. Macra aims to play its role in realising our Mission and that of our members. The measure of success of any plan is its implementation. This plan will be a living document, regularly consulted and always informing long term decisions and short-term actions in our organisation.

This plan marks a significant juncture in Macra. Two years ago, coming into the role of National President I made a commitment to our members to deliver a long term plan that reflected the changes in our organisation. I firmly believe that this document delivers a plan that when implemented will foster growth in Macra and amongst our members.

The future is full of opportunity and full of hope. Together we must implement our Plan, our Vision and realise our



Mission together. In doing so securing a better future for Macra and the community we act in and in those that call Macra Home.

Yours
John Keane
National President
2021-2023

NATIONAL CHAIRPERSONS FOREWORD

Following an intensive consultation process which began last August with our strategic committee and our strategic planners, Maire and Bernard, I am delighted to be able to present Macra's Strategic plan for the period 2023 to 2027. Thank you to everyone who has engaged with us throughout the consultation period, to our external stakeholders and the members of the public, thank you to everyone within Macra who engaged with the process, to the Board, to National Council, to the members from each of the three regions who took part in the focus groups and to our team of staff. Thank you to everyone for your significant contribution to developing our new Strategic plan.

This plan is a key part of setting direction for the organisation for the next five years and putting in place building blocks for the future. Having this plan helps us to focus, establish priorities and creates accountability. Strategic planning is an ongoing process that is never fully complete, and this document will be a living document. It will feed into an operational plan to create a road map for Mick and future Boards to deliver for members.

After almost a year of planning, consultation and work, we are delivering a strategic plan that has been developed in partnership with the members, represents the views of our members and will empower us all to achieve our mission and our vision together.

While looking to the future with our new plan, it is also important to look back and recognise the work done in 2017 by the Strategic Plan Steering group to create our first Strategic plan. This was an essential step to help guide us to where we are today. The new plan will continue to drive us forward and develop the organisation further. Behind every goal is the phrase 'Members First'. Will this goal, this action benefit members? This question was asked constantly as the plan was developed and I am confident that this plan will deliver as it is implemented going forward. Members must be at the forefront of everything we do.

I want to thank the Strategic committee, chaired by Thomas Duffy, the Board of Directors, National Council, our staff team within Macra and Maire and Bernard for all your hard work over the last number of months. Best of luck to Mick



and to our future Boards on the implementation of this plan. I look forward to seeing Macra continue to develop and evolve through the implementation of our new Strategic plan over the next five years.

Yours in Macra,
Caroline O'Keeffe
National Chair 2022-2023

CHIEF EXECUTIVE INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to introduce to you Macra's Strategic plan for the period 2023 to 2027. I think the most important element of this strategic plan is clear for all to see in our mission statement and also in our values. Macra is an organisation of and for its members, we are only here to help support and develop our members, the members are our greatest strength. The strategic plan can be distilled down into two words "members first".

The plan provides a template for us all to follow, the production of the plan was Skilfully driven by the Strategic committee under the chairpersonship of Mr Thomas Duffy. Macra went to tender and having evaluated the tenders received awarded the contract to Futurespark. With Futurespark we were introduced to Ms Maire McGrath and Mr Bernard Joyce. We were exceptionally with Maire and Bernard, from the get go they engaged with our Board, our Council, Staff, Members and industry stakeholders. They gave to us an unvarnished view of Macra that will stand to us. What became clear from all of the interactions was that Macra was about its people and how they interact with each other. As a result of all of the interactions, we arrived at a draft strategic plan. This plan has been driven by the Strategic committee who presented it to the board and to council.

We now have a clear blueprint for the future, we have clear goals, all five of them. We have a way forward together to continue to develop our members and Macra. There are many people to thank in this process, from the writers to all of our members and stakeholders who took the time to engage. As CEO I was a bystander for much of the engagement, what I did witness was a passion and a commitment from our members for Macra and each other. The production of this plan puts the passion down on paper in a format that can be followed and must be implanted.

I look forward to the next few years, where we can turn this passion into recognisable actions.

Mick Curran
Chief Executive



Strategic Planning Steering Group	
Thomas Duffy	(Chairperson)
John Keane	(National President)
Caroline O'Keeffe	(National Chair)
Luna Orofiamma	(NW Vice President)
Jonathan Dwyer	(NCR)
Maria Kenny	(Independent Board Member)

MACRA STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Our Vision

Our vision is for rural young people to be leaders, change-makers and champions on issues which matter to them shaping our communities to be vibrant, resilient and attractive places for life, and work offering a future of opportunity.

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower our members by offering new opportunities and experiences for development, connection and adventure to encourage them to be the person they want to be so they can learn, grow and flourish.

Values

Members first

As a member-led organisation, we work to meet the needs and ambitions of our members first and foremost.

Friendship and Craic

Social connection, laughter and club camaraderie are at the heart of who we are and what we do.

Inclusivity

Macra is a place of belonging where everyone is welcome, equally valued and treated with respect.

Collaboration and community

Our members, staff and volunteers together are Team Macra building positive stakeholder partnerships to benefit young people and our communities.

Courage for change

We will pioneer new ways forward for our organisation and campaign boldly on what matters to our members, young people and rural communities.

Volunteerism

We nurture, reward and celebrate our Macra volunteers enabling them to gain and grow in skills and confidence.

MACRA STRATEGIC PLAN: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To increase active membership throughout the country, including in those areas where the membership has been low historically and outreaching to connect with harder to reach target groups.

We will do this by:

- i. Collaborating with other local and regional organisations to raise awareness of our club network, who we are and what we offer to build referral pathways to recruit new members.
- ii. Working with and supporting our existing Macra membership and club network to promote Macra at local and county levels using different channels and methods of communication and promotion.
- iii. Developing our promotional reach by providing guidance/training on promoting local clubs and co-ordinating national awareness and recruitment drives to support local and regional membership development.
- iv. Sharing and implementing strategic brand architecture and media messaging recommendations with counties and local clubs supported by the Macra team.
- v. Creating specific, co-ordinated and targeted plans to re-engage members by working with members and officers at the county and club level liaising with Macra team members.
- vi. Connecting and engaging with our membership base to explore and develop their ideas, wishes and suggestions for development.
- vii. Actively using and sharing data from Macra's CRM systems to monitor membership levels and early warning signs of decreases to effectively target support for struggling clubs.
- viii. Developing a compelling and contemporary Member Value Proposition, which encompasses the promise of what we will deliver to our members, the benefits our members will reap from it, why a person should join Macra and the performance metrics we use to measure our deliverables.
- ix. Development of Recruitment and Retention framework for members, embedding these actions into all aspects of Training and Development tasks and activities alongside continuous improvement in volunteer experience.

Goal 2

CLUB DEVELOPMENT

To support all of our clubs throughout Ireland to create a welcoming and safe space for all and strengthen the support we provide to clubs to develop and grow.

We will do this by:

- i. Identifying potential connections with other community stakeholders and services and further developing partnerships with other youth organisations to support club development and pathways for young people to connect with our clubs.
- ii. Reviewing and prioritising geographical areas for targeted development support with more proactive and regular monitoring of club/membership levels to ensure support is provided when and where it is needed most.
- iii. Working with our staff and TDO team to revisit and review our club support infrastructure to ensure that we provide a model of consistent and qualitative support, resources aligned with a performance framework to meet club development needs.
- iv. Strengthening our culture of volunteerism to celebrate, incentivise and work to best practice standards to proactively support all volunteers.
- v. Exploring the potential to develop fundraising resources, approaches and support for local clubs.

Goal 3

MEMBER ACTIVITIES DEVELOPMENT

Engage with our membership to develop relevant activities that reflect the interests of our members and support their well-being, social connection and personal development.

We will do this by:

- i. Reconfiguring Macra's organisational infrastructure to provide the required level of operational support in promotion and event management across all levels.
- ii. Reviewing, refreshing and refining the volume and types of Macra events and competitions to be more relevant to members.
- iii. Building on the great leadership and personal skills we already offer by enhancing training and workshops for non-ag members.
- iv. Co-designing activities with members, the team and other stakeholders that members wish to develop in such as travel and club exchanges, sport and outdoor, regional/national social opportunities, and personal, professional/career development.
- v. Enhancing our young farmer support programmes by collaborating with key partners to focus on innovation, environmental enhancement and transition support for future changes linked to the environmental agenda and be inclusive of other areas.
- vi. Enhancing and developing mental and physical wellbeing programs. to provide support across all communities.

Goal 4

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

To generate an enhanced profile amongst decision-makers so that Macra is seen as a respected and 'go-to' body on issues for rural youth and advocate definitively on behalf of our members and their wider communities live so that rural sustainability becomes a reality for all.

We will do this by:

- i. Empowering and promoting young people's voice, representation levels and involvement in decision-making on key policy issues impacting on our communities.
- ii. Building on our powerful policy connections and access to widen Macra's focus and impact on relevant youth issues prioritising a selection from those highlighted by members as important.
- iii. Widening the diversity of youth voices by building a network of Macra members as spokespeople and developing their skills and media visibility at local, regional and national levels.
- iv. Developing wider stakeholder policy partnerships and increase collaboration with national youth organisations on relevant youth issues.
- v. Maintaining a clear focus on young farmer advocacy and leadership succession planning to deliver across national and international policy arenas.
- vi. Integrating more the work of Agricultural Affairs and Rural Youth Committees supported by enhanced policy staff capacity.
- vii. Organisation creates the opportunity to positively address environmental challenges while promoting the innovation and work of young farmers and young people in sustainable agricultural and rural enterprise.

Goal 5

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

To create an organisational structure in which the role of each of its parts is clear to all and fit for purpose and in which communication between all its parts is regular, clear and consistent.

We will do this by:

- i. Undertaking a review of organisational and staff infrastructure to ensure that operationally Macra is positioned and resourced to align with and deliver on the next strategic plan.
- ii. Aligning with work on CRMs, have a clear line of sight between a future strategy and the operational work and KPIs of teams and individual staff members in a holistic performance framework.
- iii. Implementing refreshed organisational values to underpin and operationally translate these into clear guidance for all.
- iv. Developing more open and structured team coordination, communication and channels for employee involvement.
- v. Diversifying Board and its Sub-Committees composition to bring in more external perspectives/ expertise which could also support a strategic widening of Macra's focus through either additional members or co-option.
- vi. Enabling more external involvement of other stakeholders into events and panels in Macra.
- vii. Ensuring that we work to high governance standards, financial management, CSR ethos to support continued organisational resilience and professionalism.
- viii. Develop an effective fundraising strategy to diversify our income generation.
- vi. Enhancing and developing mental and physical wellbeing programs. to provide support across all communities.

CONCLUSION

The process of arriving at a strategic plan is one that should only be undertaken if an organisation is prepared to accept what comes out of the process. In one way it is holding a mirror up to an organisation with no filters. Once the image has been seen, the organisation must accept where it is and what it intends to do about it. Macra is an organisation that has always and will always be up for a challenge. The challenge that this strategic plan introduces has to be looked at through the filter of how it will affect our members. The simple question of how this effects our members will be used in any new initiative or change being considered. It is only by using this process that we can live up to the sentiments in the phrase that our President uttered at the National Ploughing Championships in 2022 – Members First

There is an old saying "tús maith leath na hoibre", a good start is half the work, this is a good start, it provides a template for us all to follow and be measured against.

Macra na Feirme

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