**PRESS RELEASE**

**\*EMBARGOED Until Friday 10th July at 6am\***

**"SERI aims high for Irish Social Enterprises"**

**Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI) Launched to Support the Social Enterprise Sector**

A group of passionate social enterprise practitioners, key sector stakeholders and supporters have joined together to launch SERI, a representative body for the dynamic, evolving and broad social enterprise sector in Ireland.

SERI was born from the energy, knowledge and experience that exist within the sector, and a widely recognised need for a united voice. Formed by some of Ireland’s leading social enterprise practitioners and supporters, its mission is to champion for the sector and its members, both nationally and internationally.

SERI will work collaboratively with all those critical to the success of the sector, providing a unified voice for its members, who exist on a wide spectrum, from local community-based enterprises to larger, and in some cases international enterprises.

Social enterprises are businesses whose core objective is to create social, societal or environmental impact. They pursue these objectives by trading in goods and services. They re-invest any surplus profits into the organisation rather than distribute it to owners or shareholders.  The resilience and determination of many social enterprises throughout the pandemic has been evident through the development of innovative and adaptive solutions to meet the needs in our society.

The Chair of SERI, Fergus Finlay said “Social enterprise and its ecosystem have deeps roots in Ireland reaching back to the old Irish tradition of Meitheal, where people in rural communities came together to work on a neighbours farm. This embodies the spirit of social enterprise. It is clear that social enterprise has evolved to be a distinct, thriving sector. What’s next for social enterprise is in our own hands. Working collaboratively with other key players, our team and our members will forge a new beginning for social enterprise and will grow this sector to benefit all our people and communities throughout the Republic of Ireland.”

Interim CEO Tammy Darcy said “social enterprises have always played an essential part in the fabric of Irish society. The sector will play a leading and powerful role as we move through the current crisis and into recovery.  SERI is here to support social enterprises with a unified voice to release this potential so that Ireland is a better place to live and work”

Welcoming SERI, MyMind CEO Krystian Fikert said “We are living now in challenging economic times during COVID-19. Social enterprises will flourish in response to society’s needs by making services accessible and affordable. This will help the Irish economy to grow faster in a sustainable way. Now is the time for Government to recognize the social enterprise sector as a solution to building a better future in Ireland."

NOTES TO EDITOR:

The organisation, the Board of which is chaired Fergus Finlay, was founded by a team of Social Enterprise supporters including:

       Padraig Casey: CEO Ballyhoura Development Company

       Dr. Senan Cooke: Founding Member, Dunhill Rural Enterprises and Author

       Lorraine Corcoran CEO: Afanite

       Michele Fogarty: Co-Founder Peptalk

       John Kearns: CEO Partas

       Karen Leigh: CEO and Founder, Sensational Kids

       John P Murphy: CEO Speedpak

       Larry O’Neill: CEO South County Dublin Partnership

       Darren Ryan : CEO Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

       Brendan Whelan: CEO Social Finance Foundation

In addition, Tammy Darcy, Founder and CEO of The Shona Project is Interim CEO.

Photos of team available on request

Fergus Finlay and team members available for interview

Testimonials and endorsements from early members available.

Website to be launched on Friday morning [www.socialenterprise.ie](http://www.socialenterprise.ie)

Contact Tammy Darcy CEO on 087-9842505 or at tammy@socialenterprise.ie