

Catherine Cosgriff SDCRG

Catherine Cosgriff commenced Irish dancing at age 7. She joined 18 of her cousins for her first lesson in the loungeroom of her aunt. Two months later she competed in her first competition run by the Irish Pipers Association and was placed 2nd in her Jig.

All of her 5 siblings joined her at Irish dancing classes in the years to follow. Her mother would take them all on public transport to lessons, competitions and displays.

At age 9 she made her first interstate trip to Sydney, in the care of her Grandmother, to compete at the Irish National Association's Commonwealth Jubilee Feis. She was placed 1st in the 8 hand reel. The Irish Ambassador, Dr T J Kiernan presented the prizes – a silver sugar basin and a gold medal!

Catherine had a successful dancing career and went on to win several Victorian and Australian Championships in the years to follow.

She started teaching in 1959. Her first classes were for children in an orphanage in South Melbourne. She would get the tram from her home in Thornbury every Saturday to teach these children.

She travelled to Ireland by ship, train, ferry and plane in 1965 to study for and sit her TCRG under the guidance of Harry McCaffery ADCRG, becoming the 3rd qualified teacher in Australia.

The first CLRG teacher and adjudicator exams were held in Australia in 1969, the examiners being Tomás Ó Faircheallaigh and Marie Walsh. Catherine successfully gained her ADCRG certificate that year at the Melbourne centre.

She has taught thousands of children since 1959 and trained many State and Australian Champions in both solo and ceili competitions. In 1996 Conor Hayes won the Senior Mens section at the World Championships and Cosgriff ceili teams have won World Medals. Under her guidance over 40 of her students have gone on to gain their TCRG certificate and many have also obtained their ADCRG qualification. There are currently 20 members of the Victorian branch who have been part of the Cosgriff School.

Catherine held the position of secretary of the Victorian branch of AIDA for many years, in the days before internet and email, when communication was by hand written letter and post, a very time consuming position.

She has held the positions of Victorian State Delegate and Vice President of AIDA Inc. and is currently one of the Vice Presidents.

She has had the honour of being elected as Australian Vice President of CLRG several times in the past and was re-elected in May 2017 for a further term.

Catherine is also an examiner for Dancer Grade exams and Teacher and Adjudicator examinations. She is currently a member of the Examination Authority of the CLRG.

In 2007 Catherine was recognised for her long service to An Coimisiún, and to Irish Dancing in Australia. She was presented with the Gradam Award at the World Championships in Glasgow.

Catherine was a founding member of the Australian Irish Dancing Association in 1968 and has given continuous service to the association since then.



At the 50th Australian Championship Celebrations held in Adelaide in 2017 she was very involved in the item of 'Dancing through the Ages' at the Opening Ceremony and in the acquisition of 'An Astraíl – 50 Years a Growing' a suite of music sponsored by the Marie Dufy Foundation. This year will see the Diamond Jubilee Year celebrations of the Cosgriff School.

Catherine would like to express her immense gratitude to Choiste Oireachtaisí for the nomination of Co-Honouree in Glasgow and extends her best wishes to An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha for a very successful Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne 2018.