

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 27th June 2019

National Library of Ireland marks completion of phase one of its capital development project with unveiling of new book repository

Some 200,000 books can be accommodated in new onsite facility

The Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD, has today (27.06.19), unveiled a new book repository at the National Library of Ireland (NLI), with the Minister of State for the Office of Public Works and Flood Relief, Kevin 'Boxer' Moran TD. The facility represents the completion of phase one of the major capital development programme at the National Library of Ireland's main campus on Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Funding of €1.6 million was made available for this phase one of development by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2017. The work has been delivered collaboratively by the National Library, the Office of Public Works, and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Commenting, Director of the National Library, Dr Sandra Collins said: "The completion of this phase of the Library's capital development project is a huge milestone. The new book repository gives us the great relief of having safeguarded the national published collections, bringing them from poor conditions into modern, safe storage.

"This work represents the most significant development in collection care since the National Library of Ireland first opened its doors in 1890: when the Government presented us with a once in a lifetime opportunity of a major capital project, we acted swiftly and collaboratively to identify the most pressing works. At the time, given the exposure of our books to the risks of fire and water, we embarked on creating a new, fit-for-purpose book repository.

The Chairman of the National Library, Paul Shovlin added: "The Library is extremely grateful to the Minister for Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan, and Minister of State for the Office of Public Works & Flood Relief, Kevin 'Boxer' Moran for recognising the importance of addressing risk, and in supporting us over the past two years in ensuring the project got over the line.

"Seeing our new book stacks being populated with books that document our history and include precious library gems is extremely satisfying. Keeping these books safe is so vital to preserving our national memory."

The new book repository comprises 4,700 linear metres of storage. Phase one of the NLI's capital development project encompassed moving 350,000 volumes from five floors of

storage in the Victorian West Wing into both new onsite storage and high-quality offsite storage. During the course of the move, there was an audit of materials, with space and resource efficiencies identified after re-sizing of volumes, and after digitised, less-used and duplicate copies were moved to offsite storage.

Speaking at the opening of the new book repository, Minister Madigan said: "While the phase one work may not be very visible to the public, it represents a vital piece of investment that will help to safeguard the national collection for generations to come. I am delighted to make this major capital commitment as part of Ireland Project 2040, which will see major investment in Ireland's culture and heritage.

"The completion of phase one positions the NLI to now begin implementing its more public-facing developments. I am very excited about seeing new visitor experiences at Kildare Street, as well as further opening up the Library as a place of research, learning and cultural engagement for everyone to enjoy."

Minister Moran said: "It is very important that the buildings in the care of the OPW are restored and preserved, so they continue to serve the functions they were originally created to serve. Much of the capital work is slow and invisible work: making collections safe within the Library has been our critical objective in phase one of this project. Transforming spaces will be the next phase of delivery, while maintaining the integrity and beauty of the National Library."

The €14.7million National Library of Ireland capital development plan will continue to 2021, under the €23million NLI capital commitment as part of Project Ireland 2040. The coming phases will include investigative works in the Library's West Wing, an application for planning permission, and the development of new public spaces and services, as well as ensuring universal access for all visitors. The NLI will remain open throughout, minimising disruption to its services for readers and visitors. The collection care carried out through 2017 – 2019 was facilitated by a temporary closure of the reading rooms on Mondays. This service will be restored from Monday, 30th September.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

- Photographer Mark Stedman will issue photographs to picture desks this afternoon.
- NLI Director, Dr Sandra Collins is available for interview.

About the National Library of Ireland: The National Library of Ireland is the library of record for Ireland. Established in 1877, it shares the story of Ireland with the world through

its unique collections. The NLI cares for more than ten million items, including books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, prints, maps, drawings, ephemera, music and digital media. The Library is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections. The five strategic priorities for the National Library of Ireland for 2016-2021 are to collect, protect, connect, innovate and collaborate. Further information is available at www.nli.ie. Follow the NLI on Twitter [@NLIreland](https://twitter.com/NLIreland), Facebook [National Library of Ireland](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryofIreland), Instagram [@NationalLibraryofIreland](https://www.instagram.com/NationalLibraryofIreland), [Flickr on the Commons](#) and [YouTube](#).