

LAI was established in 2016 by the leading companies in Ireland's lighting industry to bring interested parties together with a view to establishing a strong, united representative body to serve the interests of all stakeholders in the sector. It is now recognised by all Government, standards and regulatory authorities – in addition to the leading professional organisations in construction – as the cohesive voice of the industry, **writes Gearóid McKenna (left), LAI Chairman.**



LAI spearheading sustainable lighting solutions

We currently have 29 members, ranging from multi-national manufacturers through to those engaged in emergency lighting, lighting agents, lighting solutions designers and bespoke lighting manufacturers.

The EU's Green Deal and Renovation Wave initiatives, and Ireland's Climate Action Plan, are excellent programmes and rightly inform and underpin the policies adopted by Ireland as we seek to reduce both our energy use and carbon emissions. For the most part though they focus primarily on heating, cooling and hot water generation. These are indeed major areas of concern, and ones that offer significant potential for savings.

However, lighting offers as much, if not more potential for energy saving and carbon reduction. Lighting impacts every aspect of modern-day living, be it homes, commercial, retail, hospitality, leisure and public buildings, not to mention outdoor lighting. Also, the pace of

development in lighting technology is phenomenal with massive gains being made on a regular basis.

With wellbeing now also high on the agenda, especially in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and changed work practices, it offers additional benefits.

The non-visual effects of proper lighting levels are critical to good health, promoting sleep and even recovery from illness, in addition to increasing concentration and performance levels

We are currently faced with two crises – the decline of the environment and Covid-19. Lighting is unique in that it offers huge benefits in tackling both at the same time.

LAI's member companies supply lamps, lighting controls and systems, commercial, architectural, interior, exterior, emergency and bespoke lighting. We service projects from residential, commercial, retail, industrial, street, urban realms,

hospitality and medical. All sectors of lighting are covered by member companies.

We are a collaborative organisation and enjoy strong working relationships with other associations, organisations and state bodies such as CIBSE Ireland, RIAI, SEAI, CIF, EIFI and WEEE Ireland. In addition, many of our members serve as LAI delegates on the executives of these bodies. Apart from that, LAI is also active internationally and is a full member of the Lighting Industry Association and LightingEurope.

The latter is especially significant as through LightingEurope we can contribute to, and influence, EU regulations relating to lighting. We are one of only 12 association members and, as such, have full access to a vast array of expertise, research data, technical support and guidance on both current and impending lighting legislation. We also have representative delegates on a number of

LightingEurope Technical Committees and that's how we contribute to, and help influence, the development of industry standards.

Apart from EU standards, we also contribute to the formation of Irish standards with various delegates serving on different NSAI standards committees. Standards development for the sector is critical and LAI has a major input to these, especially through our delegates dealing with the IS3217 Code of Practise for Emergency Lighting.

On the broader construction front, and through our membership of EIFI, we engage with CIF on a number of industry initiatives, one of the most important at present being the All-industry Task Force on product shortages and logistics issues. This is a key industry forum where information regarding product availability, manufacturing costs and transport/shipping issues is shared.

As for the EIFI itself, this is the umbrella organisation for the entire electrical industry in Ireland. We are full members along with AEW, AECI, ECA, EMDA and NECI. LAI has four delegates on the EIFI Committee. The current President, Gabriel Byrne, is a founding member of LAI.

Training and skills

Training and skills development is high on the LAI agenda with 12 members recently being awarded Lighting Certificates from the LIA. Paul O'Connor, immediate past Chair, is now the LAI Training & Education Officer. Under his stewardship LAI recently successfully tendered for LAI to provide Dialux software training courses in conjunction with Skillnet Engineering. Two courses, one for Foundation Level, the other for Intermediate Level, will take place from 1 to 4 March 2022. They will be presented by leading international lighting expert Iain Macrae, CEng FSLL MCIBSE.

The pace of change and product innovation is phenomenal in lighting with manufacturers harnessing the potential of LEDification and sustainability to deliver energy-efficient and sustainable lighting solutions. The increased value of lighting to society will come from intelligent lighting systems and human

centric lighting that also takes product circularity and wellbeing into account,

In conjunction with the stated objectives of LightingEurope, LAI's goals include:

Better enforcement: We advocate the better enforcement of EU rules to provide safe and quality products and lighting solutions;

Clear-cut product rules: Lighting products are subject to many EU rules such as ecodesign, energy efficiency, energy labelling, safety requirements for low voltage, electromagnetic or radio emitting products. The obligation to provide information on these must be clear-cut and easy to understand;

Value of lighting: Light enables vision, it helps us navigate our surroundings and makes us feel safe. But light can do so much more. By leveraging the potential of human centric lighting we combine the visual, biological and emotional benefits of light to also support people's health, wellbeing and performance. Human centric lighting provides the right light, at the right place and the right time for the activities we carry out each and every day, whether at home, school, hospital, office or on the street.

Controls and sensors:

Better lighting is enabled by lighting systems that combine controls and sensors with smartness. Intelligent lighting systems can not only deliver significant additional energy savings, but can also make our environments more attractive and functional.

Sustainability and circularity:

Europe's lighting industry has taken the lead in sustainability and circularity, not only by delivering significant energy savings but also by extending the lifetime of products, reducing hazardous substances, and collecting and recycling of waste products.

LAI's ambition is to further minimise lighting's ecological footprint and continue to deliver sustainable products and business models, in line with the EU vision outlined in the European Green Deal, Circular Economy Action Plan and Ireland's Climate Action Plan.

Emergency lighting: Emergency lighting is present in all types of buildings, from hospitals to schools, hotels, offices and residential buildings, and activates when the electric supply to the normal lighting fails. Emergency lighting provides illumination and guidance for occupants to safely exit a building in the case of an incident. Emergency lighting is mandatory, needs continuous assessment and should be properly maintained.

UV-C disinfection technologies:

In line with the LightingEurope UV-C Subgroup, LAI promotes the benefits of UV-C disinfection technologies and stimulates the uptake of safe-quality products. LightingEurope advocates the installation of UV-C disinfection technologies as part of the EU Renovation Wave and the application and enforcement of existing safety rules and standards as part of healthy and safe indoor environments. ■



Lighting Association Ireland

Knowledge | Support | Network