

18th September 2026



Press Release

On 18th of September 2026, Professor Alan Barrett, Chair of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC), announced the publication of a new NCPC Bulletin – ***Budget 2027: Securing Ireland's Competitive Position***. The paper calls on Government to safeguard Ireland's economic resilience by exercising fiscal discipline while directing available resources towards productivity-enhancing investment.

Professor Barrett said:

"Ireland enters Budget 2027 from a position of economic strength, but the global environment is increasingly uncertain. Fiscal discipline is essential to protect our resilience and to ensure that resources remain available for investments that will strengthen competitiveness over the long term, particularly in energy, water and transport infrastructure."

The paper draws on the findings of Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2026 and discussions at the third annual Competitiveness Summit, chaired by the Taoiseach and attended by the Tánaiste, Ministers, enterprise agencies and business representatives as part of preparations for Budget 2027. It highlights the combined impact of geopolitical fragmentation, trade tensions, technological disruption and energy insecurity, alongside persistent domestic pressures such as infrastructure deficits and the high cost of doing business.

The Council welcomes recent Government initiatives, including the *Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity* and the work of the Cost of Business Advisory Forum. It stresses, however, that Budget 2027 should accelerate structural action to improve energy security, reduce business costs, enhance SME access to finance, advance public service reform and digitalisation, and strengthen investment in workforce skills.

Professor Barrett added:

"Short-term supports can provide relief when firms and households face sudden cost pressures, but they cannot substitute for the structural reforms Ireland needs. Budget 2027 is an opportunity to accelerate infrastructure delivery, improve the operating environment for SMEs and harness digital technologies and AI to deliver more productive and efficient public services."

The Council is calling for a coordinated approach that balances immediate pressures with fiscal sustainability and long-term investment. Addressing these priorities will be critical to raising productivity, strengthening resilience and securing Ireland's competitive position in the years ahead.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The National Competitiveness and Productivity Council

The National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC) reports to the Taoiseach and the Government, through the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, on key competitiveness and productivity challenges facing the Irish economy and offers recommendations on policy actions required to address these challenges. Following the European Council recommendation in September 2016 and subsequent Government decision, the NCPC was designated as Ireland's National Productivity Board, tasked with analysing developments and policies in the areas of productivity and competitiveness.

Since 1997, in accordance with the NCPC's Terms of Reference, the Council has published its flagship

policy report *Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge*.

The work of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council is underpinned by research and analysis undertaken by the Enterprise Strategy, Competitiveness and Evaluation Division of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The members of the Council are:

Prof. Alan Barrett	Chair, National Competitiveness and Productivity Council
Dr. Laura Bambrick	Head of Social Policy & Employment Affairs, ICTU
Edel Clancy	Group Director of Corporate Affairs, Musgrave Group
Jenny Melia	Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Ireland
Ed Brophy	Head of Public Policy for Amazon in Ireland
Dr. Christian Ketels	Lead Economist at the World Bank, Washington
Denise Sidhu	Partner & Director, Kernel Capital
Luiz de Mello	Director of Policy Studies, Economics Department, OECD
Maeve Dineen	Chair of Ireland's Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman
Brian McHugh	Chairperson, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
Gary Tobin	Assistant Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

Michael Lohan	Chief Executive, IDA Ireland
Liam Madden	Independent Consultant, Semiconductor Industry
Neil McDonnell	Chief Executive, ISME
Bernadette McGahon	Director of Innovation Services, Industry Research & Development
Danny McCoy	Chief Executive, IBEC
Michael Taft	Research Officer, SIPTU

Representatives from the Departments of An Taoiseach; Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Environment, Climate and Communications; Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Social Protection; Finance; Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Justice; Public Expenditure and Reform; Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and Transport attend Council meetings in an advisory capacity.