

Media Release

Wednesday, 24th September 2025



**An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta**
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht

Minister Dara Calleary opens 2025 Rural Youth Assembly

- ***Minister Calleary today welcomed young people to the 2025 National Rural Youth Assembly***
- ***The Assembly is an initiative of Our Rural Future, Ireland's national rural development policy, and aims ensure the voices of rural young people are heard by Government***
- ***This year's Assembly forms an important part of the consultation process for the next iteration of Our Rural Future***

The Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, has today (Wednesday, 24th September) opened the fifth sitting of the National Rural Youth Assembly.

The Assembly brought together 65 delegates aged 12-25 to discuss the challenges, benefits, and opportunities for young people living in rural Ireland. Young people travelled from across the breadth of the country, including from the Donegal and Kerry Gaeltacht areas and the Islands to make recommendations for consideration by policymakers across Government.

The Assembly is an initiative of *Our Rural Future 2021-2025*, the Government's national rural development policy, and was proposed by young people themselves during consultation for the policy. The Assembly provides policymakers with the opportunity to listen to the views of young people from across rural Ireland, and ensure their voices are heard.

This year's Assembly serves an important forum to consult with young people on the development of the next iteration of *Our Rural Future*, which will take effect from 2026. The recommendations agreed by the young people today will help inform policies and programmes across Government over the duration of the next *Our Rural Future* policy.

Minister Calleary said:

"I am delighted to welcome the young people to today's Assembly. I thank them for their contributions, but also for their willingness to give up their time to engage with us and their clear desire to make their rural communities better places in which to grow up."

"It is hugely important that our young people have a voice in decisions which affect them. Their input can help shape policies and initiatives that support rural areas that offer young people a future that sees them remain in, or return to, their local communities to live, work or study."

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley TD, congratulated the National Rural Youth Assembly and said:

"Young people in rural areas are key contributors to their communities and to the local economy. I am proud to support the National Rural Youth Assembly because it helps young people in rural communities to have an active role in shaping their future."

"It is remarkable that we are entering the fifth Rural Youth Assembly, and I look forward to the recommendations from today's assembly being reflected in the new Our Rural Future policy."

Minister Calleary added:

"Youth organisations across the country work tirelessly on behalf of young people in our rural communities and I would like to thank them for their continued work."

"Through the National Rural Youth Assembly, we can ensure that young voices are heard in the development of the next Our Rural Future policy and remain at the heart of rural development."

"I would like to thank the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality for supporting today's Assembly, and the National Participation Office for all their effort and assistance in making the event a success."