

News

Sligo University Hospital Nurse to reach his destination in Australia after a 23 month cycle journey for charity

By Cara McHugh

FERGAL Guihen (27) is due to arrive at Sydney Opera House this Saturday, 7th of February, marking the completion of an extraordinary 23 month journey that saw him cycle from Roscommon to Sydney in the name of two good causes - the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation and North West STOP.

Departing from Ireland in March 2024, Fergal, from Arigna, covered thousands of kilometres travelling through three continents and 28 countries before reaching Australia. The journey took him across some of the world's most remote and demanding terrain, as well as through major cities and communities along the way.

He has gained much attention along his journey, boasting over 117,000 followers on Instagram as he showcased his courageous and often chaotic days cycling. Everyday, he cycles around 100km, sometimes even more - braving a variety of conditions on his trusty bike who he fondly calls Nimrod. The last few months he has been battling the outback of Australia, which has been a challenge he has proven to overcome but it's perhaps a walk in the park in comparison to what he has braved throughout his globe trotting.

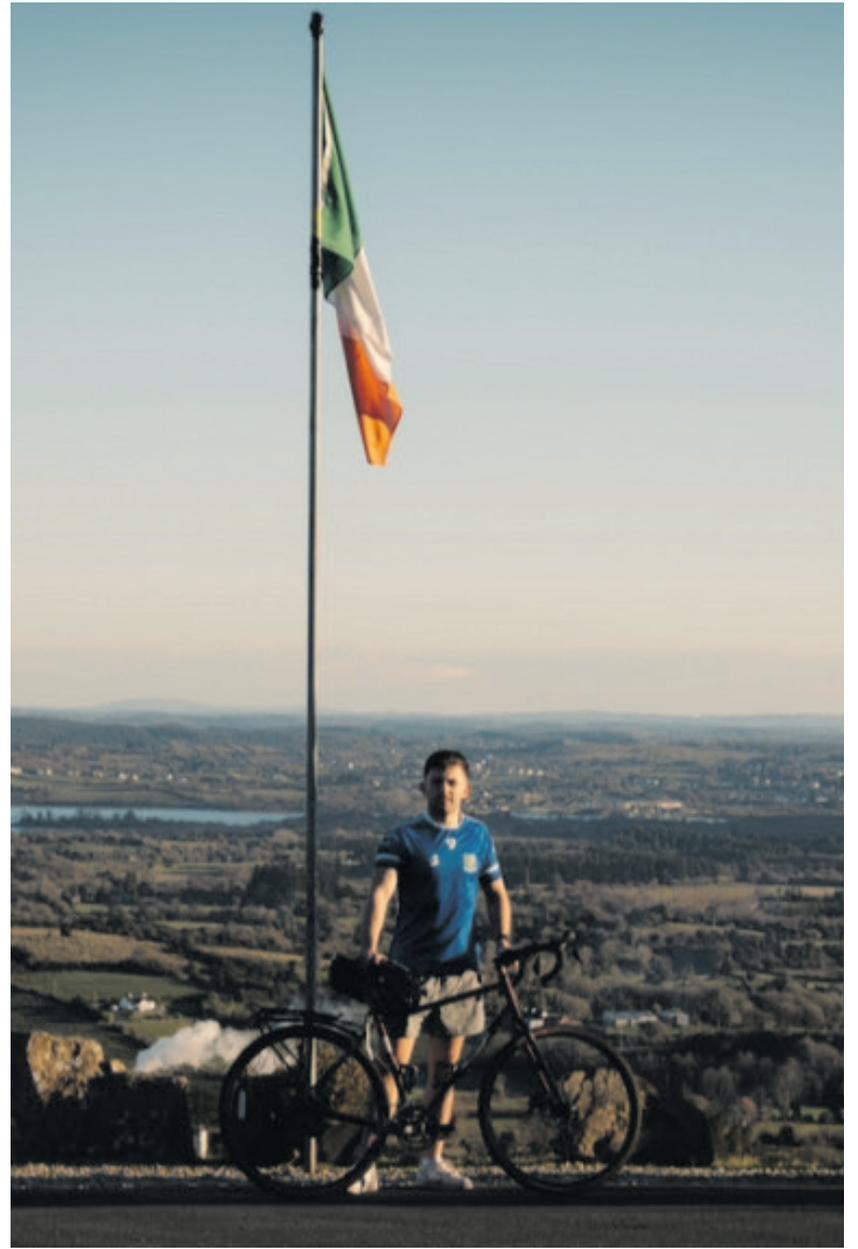
So far, Fergal has raised over €125,000, which he will be splitting evenly between his two charities of choice. He said "Mayo Roscommon Hospice is an essential charity for our community, it is not until a

family member or friend becomes terminally ill that we realise the true importance of such a service".

He also said that "North West STOP provides another vital service in our community such as counselling and a safe space for those that need it. We all go through challenging periods at some point and it is invaluable that a support service such as North West STOP is available".

You can donate to Fergal's causes via the idonate link www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/RossieToAussie and follow his journey on socials @rossie.to.aussie

Fergal is due to arrive at Sydney Opera House on Saturday, February 7 at approximately 2pm local time (3am Friday Irish time).



Sligo Chamber of Commerce to host annual Business Excellence Awards

THE Sligo Chamber of Commerce have launched the 2026 Business Excellence Awards, which will take place at The Radisson Blu Hotel on Friday March 6th 2026.

The annual awards event brings businesses and organisations from the Northwest together to celebrate outstanding Operations, Innovation or Project delivery that have positively impacted the environment, invested in staff upskilling, and showcased their readiness for future growth.

This year's award sponsors include Atlantic Technological University, Sligo Local Enterprise Office, Sligo Chamber Skillnet, a new award for Tourism & Hospitality from Fáilte Ireland and the Net Zero Achievement Excellence Award, proudly sponsored by AIB.

Businesses and organisations around the Northwest are invited to apply for the awards from today via the Sligo Chamber of Commerce website.

The categories for the 2026 Sligo Chamber of Commerce

Business Excellence awards are as follows:

1. Net Zero Achievement Award, proudly sponsored by AIB.
2. Skillnet Regional Excellence Award, sponsored by Sligo Chamber Skillnet.
3. Local Enterprise Office Excellence Award, sponsored by Sligo Local Enterprise Office.
4. Innovator Excellence Award, sponsored by ATU Sligo.
5. Tourism & Hospitality Award, sponsored by Fáilte Ireland.

Each category will be short-listed by an expert panel of judges and finalists will be announced prior to the event.

In 2025, award winners included Jennings O' Donovan (Skillnet Regional Excellence Award), Slick+ (Local Enterprise Office Award), Tanteck 4D (Innovator Excellence Award) and Vision Built (Net Zero Excellence Award).

Sligo Chamber CEO Aidan Doyle:

"The Sligo Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence

Awards continue to provide a great way of rewarding and celebrating the achievements of local businesses for their innovation, dynamism, and creativity in their operations.

The strength of business across various sectors in this region demonstrates how Sligo and the north west can grow and develop its own local businesses with the remarkable knowledge, skills and entrepreneurship while also offering a fantastic base for leading multinational companies in cutting-edge industries.

"The 2025 Awards night was a real success, showcasing some of our wonderful businesses who add to the economy both locally and nationally and we look forward to another great night this year. I want to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors, Local Enterprise Office, AIB, Atlantic Technological University, Skillnet Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and Ocean Media, for their continued support."

Communities Urged to Learn about Seizure First Aid Ahead of International Epilepsy Day

EPILEPSY Ireland is calling on the people of Sligo to learn how to correctly respond to a seizure through their key words of TIME, SAFE, STAY ahead of this year's International Epilepsy Day next Monday, February 9th.

According to Epilepsy Ireland, there are an estimated 620 people living with epilepsy in Sligo and TIME, SAFE, STAY acts as a memorable guide to help the public correctly respond to a seizure.

The organisation breaks down what is meant by TIME, SAFE, STAY?

TIME - The first thing you should do is TIME the seizure. This is because if a seizure goes over 5 minutes, an ambulance should be called.

SAFE - Keep the person SAFE during the seizure. If a person is having a convulsive seizure, cushion their head with something soft if possible and remove any harmful objects, e.g. furniture from their vicinity. NEVER put anything in a person's mouth or restrain them during a seizure. Be aware that there are also

types of seizures where the person does not experience convulsions.

Instead, they may "zone out" or stare blankly, become confused or agitated, display behaviours like chewing, smacking their lips, fiddling with their clothes, or wandering aimlessly. In this type of seizure, the person's awareness of their surroundings is affected, and it is important to gently guide the person away from any danger. As with convulsive seizures, NEVER restrict the person's movements.

STAY - During the seizure and after it passes, STAY with the person. Often after a seizure, a person with epilepsy will be confused and, in many cases, exhausted. Make sure to stay with them until recovery is complete, explain what has happened and gently reassure them. The person may have experienced an injury if they have fallen, so, ensure normal first aid steps are taken.

Aside from when the seizure goes over 5 minutes, there are other instances where an ambulance should

be called:

Call an ambulance if a person having a seizure briefly comes out of it and goes into another one.

Call an ambulance if you know it's a person's first seizure or if you're not sure whether the person has epilepsy or not (often a person with epilepsy will have a bracelet or card in their wallet/purse indicating they have epilepsy.)

Call an ambulance if the person is physically injured e.g. if they have taken a heavy fall during their seizure.

Call an ambulance if the person is pregnant.

Call an ambulance if you're in any doubt - this is the most important point of all. No-one is going to be annoyed at you for calling an ambulance out of real concern; not the person who's having the seizure and not the ambulance crew.

For more details on TIME, SAFE, STAY, International Epilepsy Day, epilepsy and Epilepsy Ireland - and to download seizure first aid posters - visit www.epilepsy.ie.