

Foreword

Invited contribution

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Preparing this foreword for the final issue of the *Irish Journal of Management (IJM)* was a real mix of emotions - pride for what was achieved, and sadness that we must bring the journal to a close. This final issue marks a significant moment in the history of Irish management scholarship, as we take a step back to reflect on the history of the journal and the vibrant academic community it has supported over the decades. Looking through the back catalogue whilst working on archiving the journal, it was lovely to see the initial publishing efforts of many now well-established academics and friends as they began their academic careers. The journal also fostered engagement with the professional world, featuring several contributions from practitioners and content aimed at informing policy and practice. The process of writing this final issue also allowed us to trace the major research themes over 50 years of the journal identifying the important management issues that were vital to Ireland at different points in time. Top of our list of priorities when planning for our final ever issue was to celebrate this historical legacy of the IJM and its predecessor IBAR and to acknowledge and thank all of the key people involved in establishing and driving the journal from its inception in 1979 to its final issue in 2025. We hope we have achieved this.

The roots of the *IJM* stretch back to 1979 with the founding of its predecessor, the *Irish Business and Administrative Research (IBAR)* journal. *IBAR* emerged at a time when the landscape of Irish business research was still very much in its infancy. At that time, the journal provided a much-needed platform for Irish academics to publish their work, exchange ideas, and begin to establish an academic identity that was uniquely Irish. In 2001, the journal evolved into the *Irish Journal of Management*, formally becoming the academic publication of the Irish Academy of Management. This transition reflected the development and integration of business and management studies as a now fully recognised field in Ireland. Kelly and Roche's paper in this issue provides a fascinating historical account of this evolution. Operating under the umbrella of the IAM, the *IJM* continued to grow in stature, offering a home for high-quality, peer-reviewed research that spoke to both local and international audiences. The journal had a focus on academic rigour and served as a vital platform for Irish-based research on pressing national issues, while also engaging with broader international scholarship.

The decision to wind the journal down was not taken lightly, nor was it made quickly. This followed several years of reflection, dialogue, and experimentation with various models and initiatives, carried out in collaboration with the Irish Academy of Management Council and the editors of the *Irish Journal of Management*. However, the evolving competitive nature of academic publishing, with its growing demands, ultimately made it unsustainable to continue the journal in its current form. Some of these challenges are highlighted in this issue by the past editors' joint paper contribution.

This special issue includes reflections from a wide range of contributors who have played important roles in the journal's history. These include former editors of the journal, previous chairs of the Irish Academy of Management,

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and one of IBAR's inaugural editors. These reflections do more than preserve the journal's history, they also reveal the achievements and challenges of the journal, the evolution of management thinking in Ireland, and the growth of our academic community. Reading through these contributions, I was struck by the commitment and drive of those who have led the journal over the years. This commitment has ensured that *IJM* remained relevant as a trusted management publication for academics over the years. Their reflections also reveal how the journal fostered a strong sense of community among Irish management academics, one built on rigour, collaboration, support, and a shared purpose.

Looking ahead, the values above that guided the *IJM* remain central to the mission of the Irish Academy of Management. We remain committed to supporting Irish scholarship, fostering meaningful academic dialogue, and championing management research that is both theoretically robust and practically significant. While the journal itself will no longer be published, we continue to support Irish scholarship through our Special Interest Groups, Early Career Development Network, and annual conference, and we welcome ideas for how we might continue to collaborate and disseminate our work, particularly with an Irish contextual focus that remains at the heart of our mission.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all who contributed to this special issue. Your reflections offer not only a record of where we have been but also gets us to think about where we might go next. Equally, I would like to thank the many people who have made the journal possible, those who started the journal, acted as editors, served on the editorial board, submitted papers and reviewed papers. I also want to acknowledge the institutions who sponsored the journal at different stages over the years - University College Dublin, Dublin City University, University of Limerick, University College Cork, National College of Ireland, Queens University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin. I would also like to express my gratitude to Maynooth University for their support in the *IJM* archiving process. Together, your contributions have helped shape management scholarship in Ireland and created the wonderful Irish management academic community that exists today.

We hope this special issue reflects the ideas, debates, and collaborations that have defined the *Irish Journal of Management* over the years and serves as a tribute to colleagues who are sadly no longer with us but whose contributions shaped the journal.

Margaret Heffernan

Chair, Irish Academy of Management (2024-2026)