

STATEMENT BY RUAIRI QUINN, TD

Minister for Education & Skills
2nd July 2014

RUAIRI QUINN TO STAND DOWN

Ireland has changed considerably since I first became politically active, many years ago.

It has changed for the better.

Ours is a wealthier nation now..

Though it doesn't always feel that way.

In the 1990s, Labour in Government made Ireland a stable, prosperous nation, moving towards full employment for our people.

Many of those gains were thrown away during the first decade of the new millennium, by many bad political decisions.

But over the last three years, every decision we have taken, was designed to restore the sovereignty of our nation.

Labour is committed to continuing this work, and achieving a meaningful recovery for all of our people.

Ireland is also a more tolerant country now, than it was when I was a young man.

We have legislated for divorce, for the decriminalisation of homosexuality and the introduction of civil partnerships.

We have finally recognised the right to life of pregnant women.

We have shone a light on many of the abuses of our people which took place in the past.

And we will go on to legislate to end employment discrimination against single mothers or gay and lesbian teachers,

And we will win a referendum to allow for same-sex marriage.

During the course of 40 years in political life, I have served as a Councillor, a Senator, and a TD.

Over the last three and a half years, I have been privileged to serve as Minister for Education and Skills - working to improve the quality of education for all.

I want to express my gratitude to the leaders of the Labour Party who entrusted me with the responsibility of Ministerial Office - Dick Spring and Eamon Gilmore.

Today, I want to announce that I will not seek to continue as a member of Government after the election of the new Leader of the Labour Party.

My resignation as Minister will take effect on the day that the Taoiseach and Tánaiste announce their reshuffle.

I want to ensure that the new Leader of my party, whoever that may be, has the opportunity to create their own team, on their own terms.

An opportunity to give a new generation a chance to lead; a chance to rebuild our party, and to finish the work of cementing a real recovery for the Irish people.

I believe that our new Leader - Joan or Alex, can do that work, with the support of a new generation of Labour politicians.

I also want to confirm that I will not seek re-election at the next General Election.

While doing so, I want to pause to thank the people of Dublin South East for giving me the honour to represent them over the years.

I also want to make clear that between now and then, the new Leader and Ministers who represent the Labour Party, will have my full support as a member of Dáil Éireann.

Finally, like all others who serve in public office - I want to acknowledge that my time in office would have been impossible without the support of my entire family - I will always be grateful for that support.
