

To: Minister Patrick O'Donovan, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (TCAGSM)

22nd April 2025

Dear Minister O'Donovan,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the RTÉRSA (RTÉ Retired Staff Association, 1000+ members) to request that there is no undue delay in communicating your support for the 4% increase in pensions proposed by the RTÉSA (RTÉ Superannuation Scheme) trustees on 10th March 2025.

As you know, the RTÉSA has a very healthy surplus after the provision for ongoing cost of living increases. The trustees of the scheme and the scheme actuary will have provided you with detailed financial information supporting the affordability of the proposed 4% increase in pension payments. In particular, the risk profile of the scheme has been fundamentally altered over the last two years with substantial reserves providing for cost of living increases and with over 75.3% of the scheme assets currently invested in sovereign bonds.

As you are aware, the RTÉRSA wrote to your office last year expressing our disappointment at the tardiness with which the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports & Media (TCAGSM) had supported the RTÉSA pension increases proposed by the Scheme Trustees with the approval of the Scheme Actuary in recent years. For example, the increase for 2022 proposed by the trustees in April '22 had taken a full eighteen months (October 23rd 2023) for TCAGSM to approve. The Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, (DPENDR), Minister Donohue, gave his consent to this increase on 23rd Nov 2023. As you will understand, your department's unnecessary delay in granting pension increases has a major detrimental impact on our members, an increasingly elderly and financially stressed body of retired staff.

In contrast to 2022/2023, last year the RTÉSA trustees recommended an increase for 2024 on 27th May. We received confirmation from TCAGSM just over two months later, on August 6th 2024, that Minister Martin had written to the Minister for Public expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) about this. (We received final confirmation from the trustees of the increase in early October 2024). In his letter of August 6th, Mr Donal Crowley, Head of Human Resources, TCAGSM, noted in the final paragraph, *'I can assure you that the Department will endeavour to ensure that all of the participating parties RTÉ, RTÉSA, NewERA and DPENDR will play their part in responding in a timely manner in reviewing this request, in the best interests of the members, both active and retired, of the RTÉ Superannuation Scheme'*.

It's also worth noting that on the 10th July 2024 in a letter to the RTÉRSA, Mr Terence O'Rourke, RTÉ Chair wrote the following: *'I can confirm that the RTÉ Board has fully and formally supported the proposed increase and that this has been communicated to your Scheme's trustees. I also understand that RTÉ has communicated this to the relevant government departments. This will hopefully ensure the proposal is dealt with as expeditiously as possible'*

Our members in the RTÉRSA are very grateful for the increased speed with which we received our increase in 2024.

Now in 2025, given that the trustees have forwarded their recommendation over two and a half months earlier than last year (March 10th), we hope that this earlier timeframe will be reflected in the speed with which TCAGSM approve the increase this year and that you communicate your support to DPENDR for the 4% increase as expeditiously as possible.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards

Stephanie Fitzpatrick  
Chair, RTÉRSA

cc. Mr Donal Crowley, Head of Human Resources and State Boards Liaison Officer; Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media cc. Minister Jack Chambers, Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery & Reform cc. Mr Ian Kelly, Private Secretary to the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Dev Plan Delivery & Reform