SUMMARY
The promotion of archaeology in understanding the past and as a valuable resource shared by all. Archaeology 2025 offers a sustainable, strategic pathway towards understanding, enjoying and protecting the potential benefits of archaeology. These aims can be achieved by investing to support excellence in archaeology at all levels, by valuing research, and by engaging communities.
Archaeology 2025 is an initiative of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA), driven by the RIA’s Standing Committee for Archaeology. It is a long-term strategy based on the key strength of an inclusive approach, with inputs from a broad range of interested parties: those within the archaeological profession as well as external stakeholders. Hence the recommendations are consensus-based and well developed. The RIA is confident that implementation of the recommendations will strengthen archaeology’s role in studying and understanding Ireland’s story and as a key element of the cultural-heritage sector.

Ireland’s cultural heritage is a crucial element of the island’s attraction as a place to live, work and invest. Archaeological sites, built heritage, the historic environment and museum collections are significant contributors to the creation of local and national identities for Ireland’s citizens, attracting visitors, and are a source of connection and pride for the Irish diaspora. Knowledge management, research, publication and communication are vital to realising this rich potential.

Archaeology 2025 aims to develop a sustainable strategy for the future. The archaeological sector, as an element of cultural heritage, has the potential through research on Ireland’s past to contribute to policy areas such as tourism, climate change, social inclusion, demographic change, health and well-being. There are opportunities through participation and training in archaeology and cultural heritage to develop transferable skills across a broad section of society and to foster a wider appreciation of the social value of archaeology.

It is intended that Archaeology 2025 will be used as:

> an advocacy document to inform decision-making processes regarding archaeology and cultural heritage
> a key reference point for policy-making
> a consensus-based framework to guide stakeholders into the next decade
> a key statement from the archaeological profession through the RIA, in advance of, and to inform, the emerging National Heritage Plan, and as a key contribution to the Culture 2025 national cultural policy (2016) and to the Creative Ireland initiative (2017–22).
STRUCTURE OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2025

Section I, Understanding Archaeology, and Section II, Strategic Context, provide background and contextualisation. The focus of Section III, Priority Pillars is six priority areas (pillars) identified during the consultation process:

1. Delivering Archaeology
2. Sustaining Practice
3. Modernising Legislation
4. Expanding Research Horizons
5. Developing Education and Skills
6. Maximising Impact

Following detailed discussion of each of these key pillars, a series of recommendations are presented.

Implementation of Archaeology 2025 is discussed in Section IV. Section V presents all the recommendations in the context of core objectives.
OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION

The overarching recommendation of Archaeology 2025 is that proper resourcing and management of the state and private archaeological sectors are necessary, particularly if current population and economic growth continue. Critical shortcomings diminish the sectors’ ability to respond effectively to new programmes of planning and development.

This will not only have a negative effect on Ireland’s archaeology but will also hinder and delay the sustainable development required to underpin the economy, including the provision of housing and other infrastructural development.

There is a strong recognition of the need to maximise archaeology’s vital contribution to Irish society in studying and understanding the past, to allow for more effective interactions between archaeological and non-archaeological agencies, and to ensure the preservation of this irreplaceable national resource.
Invest strategically in the promotion, protection and management of
the archaeological resource—in summary: monuments and museums

Enable sustainability and development in archaeological practice

Update legislation to regulate and manage archaeological practice

Explore new research strategies and expand research impact

Engage, involve and inform the public

Explore new ways of presenting and communicating archaeology

With a sustained commitment to
the implementation of these core
recommendations, by 2025 Irish
archaeology will achieve its
potential in terms of contributing to
sustainable development, vibrant
places and communities and
knowledge creation.

The measures identified in this
process are essential to achieving
the real partnership needed
to realise maximum knowledge
and enjoyment from our
archaeological resource.
The promotion of archaeology in understanding the past and as a valuable resource shared by all.