



**John O'Donoghue**

## **Regional Operations Manager for the Eastern and Midlands Region**

John O'Donoghue is Irish Water's Regional Operations Manager for the Eastern and Midlands Region, and along with his team is responsible for the management of water and wastewater operations across the region. John, a Civil Engineering graduate from University College Cork and resident of Mullingar has worked as an engineer for more than 35 years and is one of Irish Water's leading engineers who wants to inspire young people to consider a career in engineering during Engineers Week this year.

The Eastern and Midlands Operations team work closely with their Local Authority partners in Dublin (Fingal, Dublin City, DLR and South Dublin), Wicklow, Kildare, Meath, Louth, Longford, Westmeath, Offaly and Laois to deliver treated drinking water to millions of people and thousands of businesses every single day.

The size and scale of the operations of Irish Water's water and wastewater network is significant as John highlights, "Irish Water produces 1.7 billion litres of treated drinking water every single day, transporting it to homes and businesses through a vast network of pipes under the ground. We also treat approximately 1.6 billion litres of wastewater on a daily basis returning it safely to the environment."

Speaking about his role in Irish Water, John said, “Our priority is to deliver a safe and sustainable supply of drinking water to homes and businesses and to manage the wastewater network transferring wastewater to treatment plants before discharging treated effluent safely to the environment.”

Speaking about why he chose engineering as a career, John said, “I knew from an early age that I wanted to become an engineer. I worked on construction sites with my father at weekends and this is where the seed was sown. I was always interested in large construction projects and I remember reading about the construction of the Vartry water supply scheme in the 1860s by Dublin Corporation. This was a landmark engineering project of its time, with much of the work being done by hand using shovels and picks as well as horses and carts.” He added, “Irish Water is currently upgrading the scheme using much more modern construction methods. A new water treatment plant is being built and a new pipeline, the Vartry to Callowhill link was completed in 2019 replacing the old Vartry tunnel. Upgrade works to the Vartry Reservoir and a new covered storage reservoir at Stillorgan are also underway as part of this major upgrade that will safeguard the water supply to homes and businesses right across North Wicklow and Dublin for decades to come.”

John has been involved in ensuring the continuity of water supply during the droughts of 2018 and 2020 as well as during extreme weather events like Storm Emma. Speaking about these events John highlights that, “These events serve as a reminder of how precious water is and that treated drinking water is not an unlimited supply so conserving it where possible and only using what we need is important irrespective of whether we are in drought or experiencing an extreme weather event.”

John’s advice for young people leaving school, “As a professional engineer, you get to tackle real problems and find the best engineering solutions to those problems. Every working day is different so if you are a creative thinker, enjoy problem solving and like variety, engineering is a career choice worth exploring.”