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Houses of the Oireachtas

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Quarter 2 2025 – 21 August

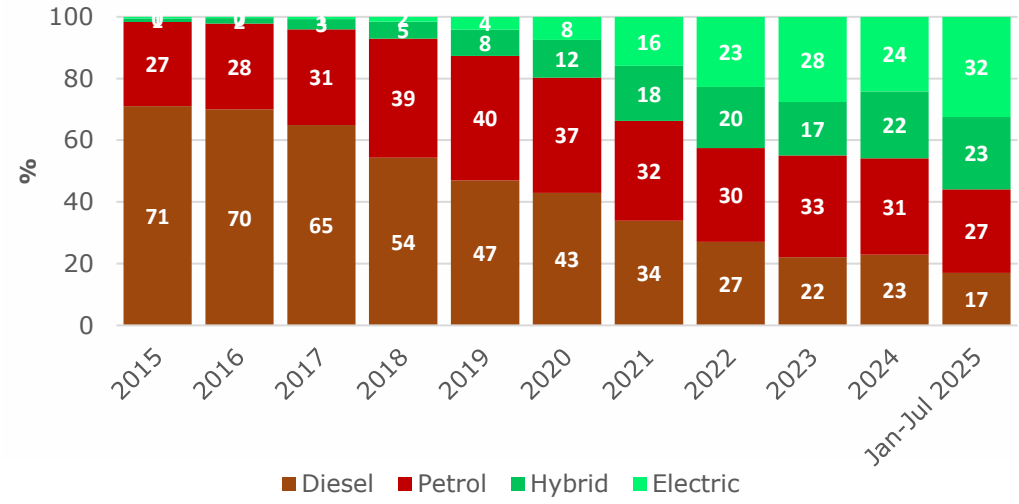
Author: Eoin McLoughlin, Senior Parliamentary Researcher (Economics)

TRANSPORT

Explainer: This indicator details the **percentage of electric vehicles (full battery electric and plug-in hybrid) as a share of new private cars licensed for the first time** and also **the total number of passenger journeys by public transport.**

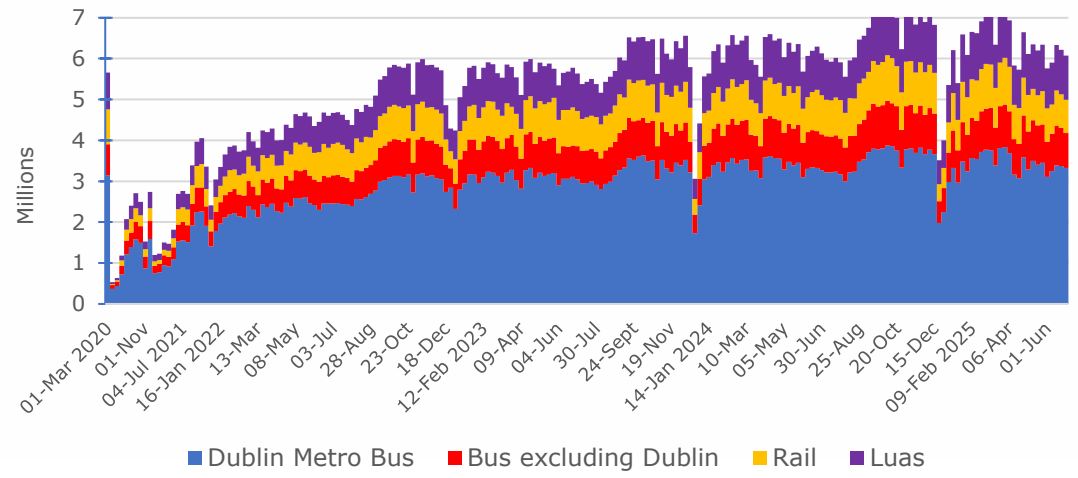
ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The number of electric vehicles (EVs) as a percentage of new licensed private cars had been increasing in Ireland every year since 2016. In 2015, **0.5%** of new licensed private cars were electric while by 2023 this had increased to **28%**. While there was a falloff in 2024, EVs have since increased to **32.4%** of new licensed private cars to date in 2025 (**17.4%** of which are full battery electric as opposed to plug-in hybrids). The **Climate Action Plan 2025** aims to have **30%** of the total passenger car fleet and **100%** of new car registrations electric by 2030.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The number of passenger journeys on public transport has surpassed pre-COVID-19 volumes. The latest data shows that for the week commencing 29 June 2025, the number of public transport journeys totalled **6.1 million**, 55% of which were by Dublin Metro Bus. Bus (excluding Dublin) accounted for 14% of journeys, rail 13% and Luas 18%. For more on transport indicators see the CSO **Transport Dashboard**.



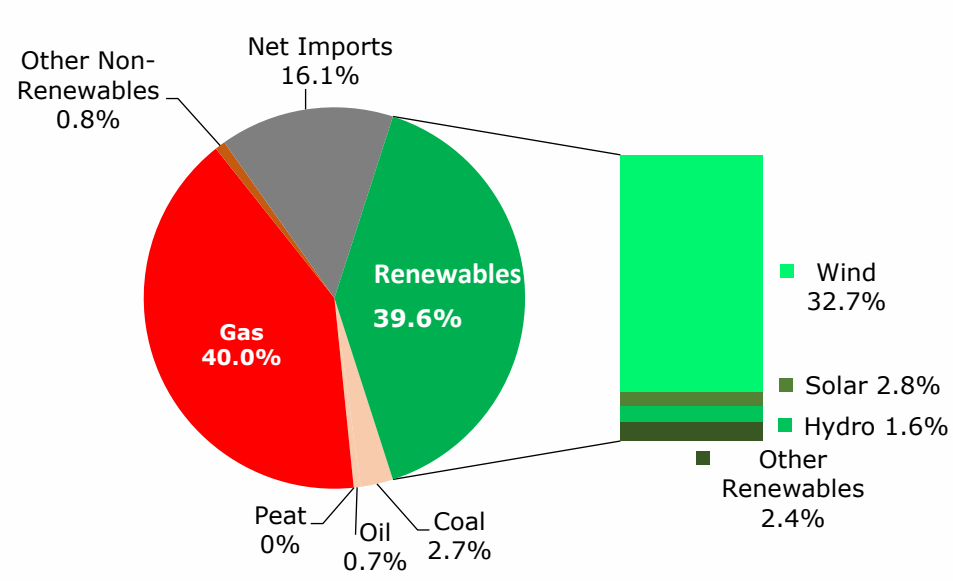
Sources: CSO – New Vehicles Licensed for the First Time and Transport Dashboard.

ENERGY

Explainer: This indicator details **Ireland's overall fuel mix for electricity generation**. It also includes figures on the **energy performance of the national dwelling stock** derived from the Building Energy Rating (BER) dataset.

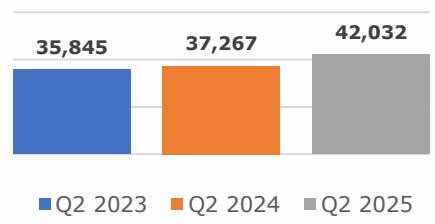
ELECTRICITY FUEL MIX

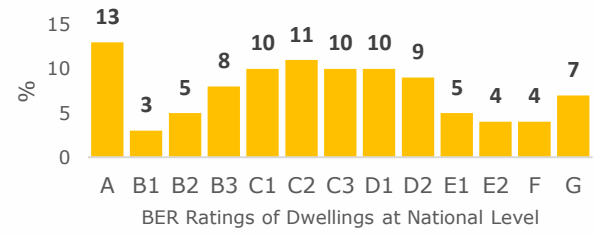
The share of electricity generated by renewables over the most recent period with data available (Jul-2024 to Jun-2025) was **39.6%** with wind (alone) accounting for **32.7%** of the total. The target under the **Climate Action Plan 2025** is to achieve up to **80%** renewable electricity by 2030. More frequent data on the fuel mix is available here from EirGrid.



BUILDING ENERGY PERFORMANCE

There were **42,032** BER audits in Q2 2025, a **13%** increase on the same period in 2024. Dwellings with BERs have been weighted by the CSO to estimate a BER profile for all dwellings at a national level. This shows that **21%** of dwellings (347,915) have an energy rating of B2 or higher. The target set under the Climate Action Plan is for 500,000 homes to upgrade to a B2 equivalent BER by 2030. In 2024, **21,817** homes were retrofitted to a B2 BER or better with SEAI support. Further information in relation to BER statistics is available here based on data from SEAI.





Sources: EirGrid database and CSO Domestic Building Energy Ratings (July 2025).

AIR QUALITY

Explainer: This indicator details **current exceedances of air quality limit values for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter** in Ireland.

NITROGEN DIOXIDE (NO_2)

The main source of NO_2 in Ireland is road transport. The hourly limit for NO_2 is 200 ug/m3. EU limits are deemed breached if more than 18 exceedances occur during the year. Based on available data from existing monitoring stations to 30 June 2025, no values in excess of the hourly limit have been recorded.

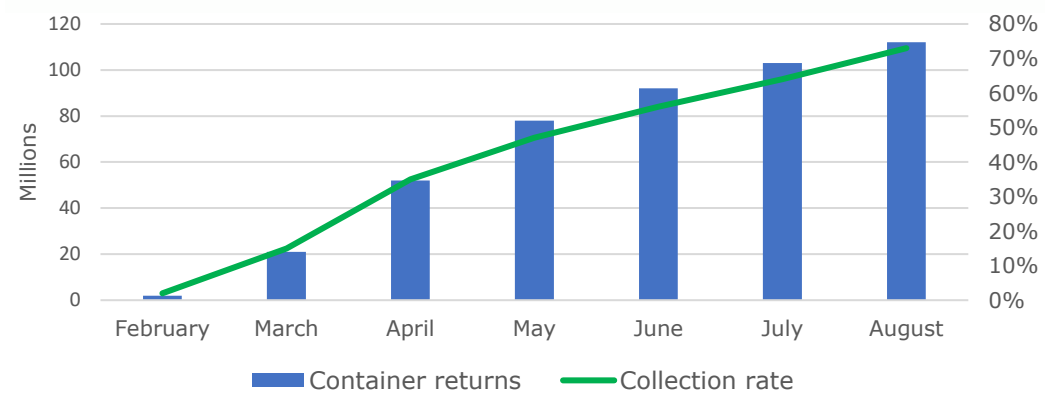
Station Name	No. of values greater than 200 ug/m³ (year to date)	Station Location	Station Type
No station recorded values in excess of the hourly limit to end of June 2025.			

WASTE

Explainer: This indicator measures the **quantity of containers** returned under the Deposit Return Scheme.

WASTE

In August 2024, **112 million** drinks containers were returned under the Deposit Return Scheme, which was an increase of **9%** compared to July 2024. Based on provisional data, the monthly collection rate at the end of August was **73%** (right axis). The EU has set Ireland a target to separate and collect 77% of plastic beverage bottles by 2025, and 90% by 2029.



Source: Gov.ie.

PARTICULATE MATTER (PM_{10})

The main source of PM_{10} in Ireland arises from the burning of solid fuel. The daily limit for PM_{10} is 50 ug/m3. EU limits are deemed breached if more than 35 exceedances occur during the year. Based on available data from existing monitoring stations to 30 June 2025, the stations showing the most recorded values in excess of the daily limit are shown in the table below.

Station Name	No. of values greater than 50 ug/m³ (year to date)	Station Location	Station Type
Ennis	7	Co. Clare	Suburban Background
Ringsend	3	Dublin 4	Urban Traffic
Tralee	2	Co. Kerry	Suburban Background
Wexford Opera House	2	Co. Wexford	Suburban Background

Source: EPA – Air Quality Bulletin.

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ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS
Annual statistics

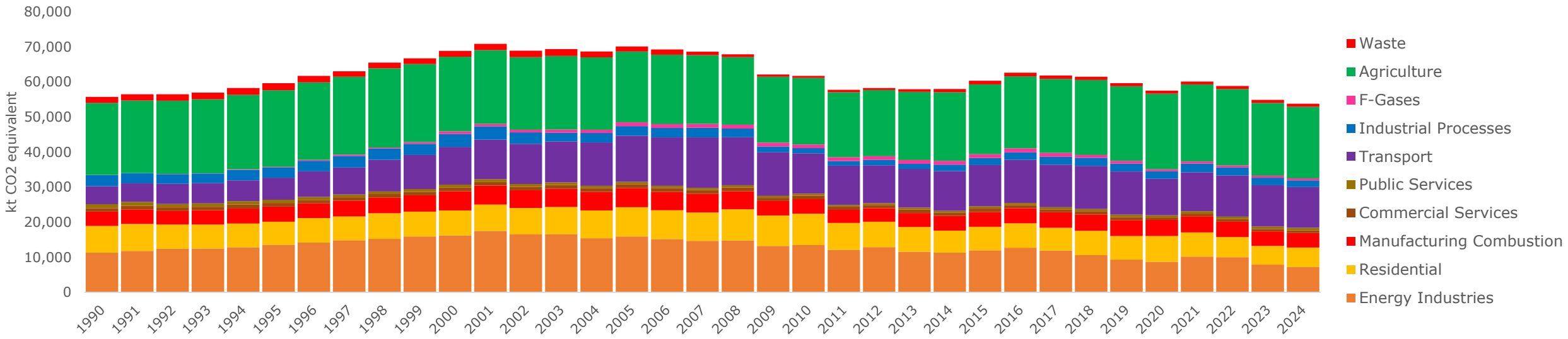
Author: Eoin McLoughlin, Senior Parliamentary Researcher (Economics)

GHG EMISSIONS

Explainer: This indicator **details overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emission figures** for Ireland since 1990 by sector. Reference is also made to current **GHG emission projections.**

NATIONAL GHG EMISSIONS

For 2024, provisional total GHG emissions are estimated to be 53.75 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO_2eq). This is **2.0%** lower than emissions in 2023 and was driven by decreases in all key sectors (except heating of buildings). Agriculture (**38.0%**), Transport (**21.7%**) and Energy Industries (**13.3%**) account for the largest share of emissions. The EPA published Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2024-2055 in May 2025 which produced two scenarios – *With Existing Measures (WEM)* and *With Additional Measures (WAM).* The EPA notes that Ireland is set to miss its 2030 EU target of a 42% reduction in emission levels compared to 2005, with emissions projected to achieve a reduction of 10% under the WEM scenario and a 22% reduction under the WAM scenario. It is also set to miss its own national 51% emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018) with projections showing a reduction of 9% under WEM and 23% under WAM scenarios.



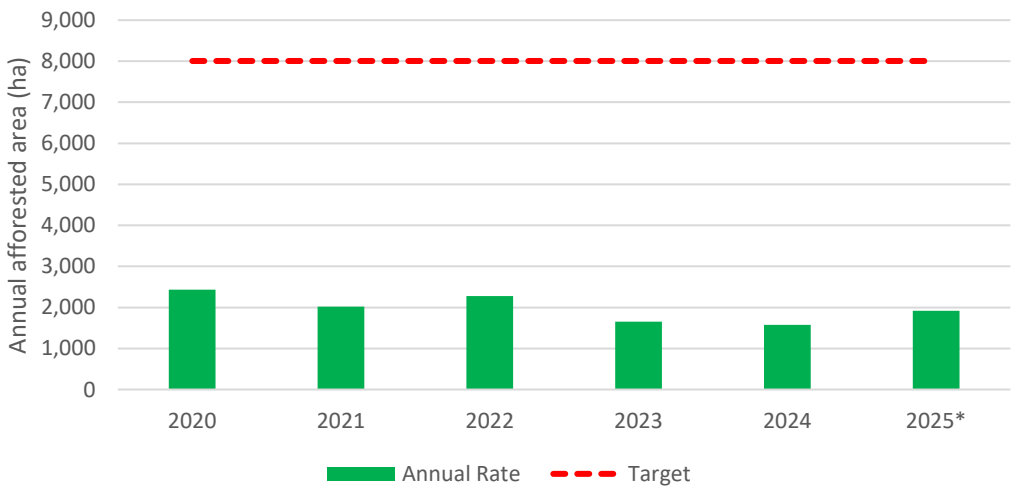
Source: EPA – July 2025

AGRICULTURE

Explainer: This indicator shows the **annual amount of private and public forestry** planted in Ireland.

FORESTRY

In 2024, **1,573 hectares** of private and public forestry was planted in Ireland. This was a **decrease of 5%** on the year before. The target set under the Climate Action Plan is an annual afforestation rate of **8,000 hectares**. Up to mid-August, **1,918 hectares** of forestry had been planted to date in 2025. Forestry plays an important role in relation to biodiversity [see related blog posts on the subject from L&RS here].



*year-to-date (up to mid-August 2025)

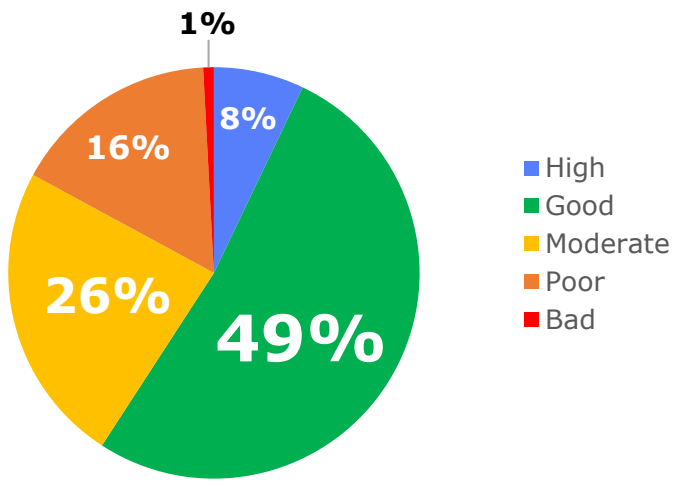
Sources: DAFM – Annual Review and Outlook.

WATER

Explainer: This indicator shows the **water quality status** of Irish surface waters and groundwater.

WATER QUALITY

Around **57%** of surface waters and groundwater in Ireland are of good or high quality. About **26%** are in moderate condition while the remainder are either in poor (**16%**) or bad (**1%**) status. Further information on water quality in Ireland can be found here.



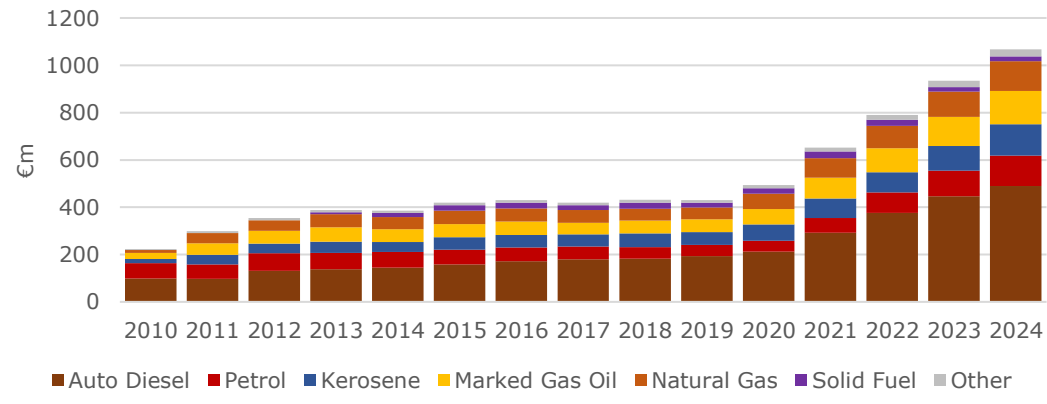
Source: EPA – catchments.ie.

CARBON PRICING

Explainer: This indicator details the **current level of the carbon tax** in Ireland as well as the breakdown of revenue receipts.

CARBON TAX

A carbon tax was introduced in Ireland from 2010 onwards. In *Budget 2025* the rate increased to €63.50/tonne. Revenue from the carbon tax rose to just over **€1 billion** in 2024. Auto diesel accounts for the largest share of receipts at **46%**. In 2024, **€951m** of the carbon tax funds were allocated to areas such as energy efficiency supports, social protection interventions, and incentivising greener farming practices [see detailed carbon tax revenue analysis from DPENDR here].



Source: Revenue - Excise Receipts by Commodity.

BIODIVERSITY

Explainer: This indicator measures the **trends in biodiversity** across a range of different categories.

BIODIVERSITY TRENDS

National Biodiversity Indicators have been developed for Ireland and provide a key resource for tracking changes in our environment over time. The status of birds is currently classified as intermediate though there are variations among different species. Short-term declines have now been established for bee populations and long-term declines for butterfly populations. Further information in relation to other biodiversity indicators for Ireland is available here.

	Status		
Biodiversity Indicator	**Current**	**Short-term**	**Long-term**
Trends in the status of birds			
Trends in the status of bees			
Trends in the status of butterflies			
Trends in the status of plants			

green = positive **orange** = intermediate **red** = negative **grey** = unknown

Source: National Biodiversity Data Centre indicators.

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