



**Smiles better:** Lorraine Keane with baby Luke McCormack at the launch of WEEE Ireland's campaign to recycle and raise funds for Children's Sunshine  
Home Pic: Maxwells

## Public service job cuts

*Continued from Page 1* €2.5billion a year. Mr Howlin vowed all job cuts would be through voluntary redundancies and retirements.

The merger and abolition of quangos will claw back another €20million, he said. The Government also plans to reduce the number of court venues around the country, sell off unused public buildings and force agencies and departments to share human resources, finance, payroll, banking and pensions functions to save money.

Other cost-cutting measures include a 32-day cap on public sector annual holiday leave, including the scrapping of days off for the likes of local festivals and races, Mr Howlin added.

Some staff were found to have more than 40 days' annual leave.

The minister said the reform would be a challenge but was necessary to make the savings needed.

But Seán Fleming, Fianna Fáil public spending spokesman, said the only real change being proposed was an extra 12,000 job losses which are not required under the terms of the EU/IMF bailout deal. 'The biggest failure in this document is the complete lack of a plan to protect frontline services,' Mr Fleming said.

Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin's public spending spokeswoman, described the cutbacks as a further worrying attack on frontline services.

# Integrated ticketing is almost here

By **Ross McDonagh**

TWELVE years after it was first announced, integrated ticketing is finally here. Almost.

The new Leap Card, a single card that will allow travel on rail, bus and Luas, will go on sale within a matter of weeks.

For the final stage of testing, the National Transport Authority is looking for 500 'goodwill ambassadors' from the general public to volunteer and try out the new card, complete with a free €20 top-up.

'It is great to see this scheme nearing completion and positive for commuters,' said public transport minister Alan Kelly.

'The new Leap Card will be easy to use and will be a real help for people travelling around the city by Dublin Bus, Luas, DART and Commuter Rail services. We encourage people to sign up for this final testing stage as goodwill ambassadors, and once we get feedback from users, the card will be introduced for wider public usage.'

An integrated ticketing system was first mooted in 1999 by then-minister for public enterprise Mary O'Rourke, pre-dating even the Luas by five years.

The project has a budget of €55mil-



**Leap of faith:** Minister Alan Kelly with the new integrated ticket, the Leap Card  
Picture: Maxwells

lion, of which €48m has been spent.

Similar to the Oyster system in London, Leap users carry a single card that can be topped up with credit. Commuters simply touch it off a sensor as they enter or exit the vehicle and the fare is automatically deducted.

Rail Users Ireland welcomed the step towards general rollout, adding that savings of between ten and 40 per cent could be made on cash fares when travelling on Luas or Irish Rail.

They criticised the fact that Dublin Bus was not offering a discount on its cash fares, but a spokeswoman for the company argued that the maximum fare that can be charged on a Leap Card is €2.20, meaning anyone making longer journeys is making a saving.

To apply to try the card, go to [www.integratedticketing.ie](http://www.integratedticketing.ie).

## DSK linked to teenage call girl ring in France



DSK: Link to vice

**GIRLS** as young as 15 were part of an illegal vice ring with alleged links to Dominique Strauss-Kahn, it emerged last night. The teenagers, named in prosecution files, include six who were apparently aged 15 and 16 when they were made available to 'prestige' clients. There is no suggestion the former IMF head slept with the girls, all of whom were reportedly involved in the prostitution racket at a hotel in Lille, northern France. It came as Strauss-Kahn, 62, was alleged to have taken part in up to 11 orgies over six years with a single call girl. He denies any involvement in the case.



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