

Join the rush to leave

Record high as hordes check out jobs abroad

By **Michelle O'Keeffe**

THOUSANDS of people desperate to flee recession-battered Ireland for new lives and well-paid jobs overseas flocked to the RDS in Dublin over the weekend.

Families and young job-seekers patiently stood in a long queue in the rain yesterday as they waited to get into the Working Abroad Expo.

Inside, government immigration officials, employers, recruiters and visa experts from Australia, New Zealand and Canada gave advice on how to embark on a new life overseas.

Expo organiser Stephen McLar-

800

The number of construction workers Christchurch needs

non said the two-day event had been attended by unprecedented numbers of prospective emigrants.

'Demand has been at record numbers. We have had thousands of people through the doors,' he said.

'In seven years, we have never had so many people queuing outside the RDS. It's no surprise, considering the record numbers emigrating.'

The exhibition used to cater for 20,000 young people every year who wanted working holidays, but this year there were more young families who feel they have no choice but to

leave after losing their jobs.

'The demographics have definitely changed, with more people over 30 with children planning to emigrate, as many have lost their jobs and can't find employment,' he said.

'When you are over 30, the process is more difficult. Generally, to get a visa, they need to find work and then their employer sponsors them.'

North American giant PCL was at the event to recruit employees on

the spot for construction jobs. 'PCL was interviewing at their stall and employing there and then. So there were people going home very happy,' Mr McLarnon added.

Most of the jobs on offer were in construction, health and teaching.

The AMVL Employment Network was also offering 200 jobs to engineers and mechanics for Australian companies. And Irish firm Osborne

Recruitment drew big crowds, as they had 500 vacancies in areas such as engineering and surveying.

The recruitment firm has experienced a 'surge in demand' for construction workers in western Australia due to the mining boom.

And the Expo organiser said around 800 construction jobs will soon be available in New Zealand with a company working to help re-

build earthquake-hit Christchurch. Andrew Burn, 31, from Greystones, Co. Wicklow, is planning to emigrate to New Zealand in January with his partner, Ruth Paton, 32, and their nine-month-old son, Darragh, after losing his job in construction.

He said: 'There is just no work in Ireland, we have no choice. Ruth is from New Zealand so we will have a

good network there, but it is very

difficult leaving my family here.' And it is not just the unemployed who plan to leave. Edel and Neill Flynn, from Templeogue, Dublin, have jobs, but they are planning to move to Australia with their daughters, Niamh, seven, and Sarah, four.

Mrs Flynn said: 'It's a lifestyle choice, as the cost of living here is making life pretty difficult.'

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WE'D LOVE TO STAY AND WORK HERE BUT THERE ARE NO JOBS

FRIENDS Helen Connolly and Melissa Whyte are emigrating to Australia as they have been unable to find work here since graduating from college.

Miss Connolly, 22, from Palmerstown, Dublin, graduated with an engineering degree from Dublin Institute of Technology in June.

Miss Whyte, 24, also from Palmerstown, has just finished her professional accountancy exams – but neither young professional can find a job in Ireland.

Months of unemployment forced Miss Connolly to decide to move to Australia.

She said: 'After spending four years studying, it is frustrating not to be able to get a job.'

'Since I graduated I have been searching for a job but there is nothing in my field. I would love to get work here, but there are no opportunities.'

The young graduate claims that she is luckier than most, as she has a brother in Perth and a network of friends in Aus-

tralia. She said: 'Most of my friends have already moved there and they all love it. They have great jobs and are making plenty of money.'

'I plan to stay in Australia for a couple of years, but I would love to return to Ireland if things improve and there is work.'

Her friend spent 18 months in Australia before returning here to sit her exams. She had hoped to stay at home, but cannot find an accountancy job.

She said: 'I came back in July after spending a year and a half working in Sydney.'

'I came home to complete my exams and I hoped to get a job here.'

'I was hoping it was not going to be as bad here as people were saying, but it is worse.'

'I was so excited about coming home and I am very disappointed that I have no choice but to leave again.'

'All my friends in Australia want to come home but they can't as there are no job opportunities.'

EMIGRATING IS ONLY OPTION

LORNA GAFFNEY and Joe Duggan plan to leave Ireland with their three children to start a new life

abroad as they cannot afford to stay.

The Longford couple said they have no choice but to move to Canada or New Zealand. Mr Duggan has been unemployed for four years since losing his construction job and they cannot live on his partner's waitressing wages.

Miss Gaffney



(pictured) said: 'I work part-time, but that doesn't cover our mortgage and expenses, the bills are piling up.'

'It is not feasible to stay here. We don't want to go, but we have no choice.'

She said it is hard to uproot their children, Larissa, 12, Caoimhe, three, and one-year-old Fionn.

She said: 'We didn't make the decision lightly, we hate the thought of taking the children away from family.'

'If Joe had work we would never dream of leaving.'





Off to Oz:
Helen
Connolly
and
Melissa
Whyte

