



# Up to 5,000 people visit **Working Abroad** expo

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THERE IS no shortage of Irish emigrants working in Australia and New Zealand to cheer on Ireland in the Rugby World Cup and they are likely to be joined by thousands more emigrants in the coming years.

Queues for the **Working Abroad** Expo stretched around the block at the RDS in Dublin yesterday.

The hardest sell came from Australia's **Northern Territory**, which even brought its employment minister Rob Knight. The Territory may have a reputation for being hot and empty, but it is also undergoing an unprecedented boom with huge reserves of oil and gas.

The **Northern Territory** is expected to need at least 20,000 new workers over the next five years because the jobs cannot be filled locally or elsewhere from Australia. There are vacancies in 130

professions, Mr Knight said, from construction to the booming mining and medical sectors.

Despite its vast size and low population, the Territory is undergoing a housing boom. Because of a shortage, a two bed flat in the capital Darwin costs an average of €310,000 while a three-bed house costs an eye-watering €371,000. Average salaries are between €40,000 and €45,000.

Greg Bicknell from the chamber of commerce acknowledged that the **Northern Territory** was not as sought-after a location as cities such as Melbourne or Sydney, but it had one critical selling point.

"We have more employment opportunities. Other cities in Australia are undergoing a recession because the strength of the Australian dollar is making the manufacturing sector uncompetitive."

Two areas undergoing commod-

ities booms, Western Australia and Alberta in Canada, were also represented at the expo, as was New Zealand, which desperately needs workers to rebuild earthquake-hit Christchurch.

Between 4,000 and 5,000 attended over the weekend.

James O'Meara from Tipperary, turned up with his family to look for a new start abroad. A metal fabrication specialist, he said "anywhere that is not here" would be his preference to move abroad.

"I have work all the time but there's just too many overheads in this country."

Logistics engineer Cathal, who did not want to give his second name, said his profession in Ireland had been "wiped".

The Dublin man, who is in his late 30s, said opportunities were dwindling by the week.