



# HOUSE ABOUT IT?

## Irish women flock to South Africa for massive build

By **ANDREE HESLIN**

**SOME 300 Irish women have flooded into the South African town of Mbekweni as part of the seventh Niall Mellon Township Trust building blitz.**

A whopping 500 volunteers arrived on Saturday in Mbekweni, Paarl, to build 75 houses in a country where at least two million people are waiting for a home.

This year's contingent marks the first time female workers have outnumbered the men, with three women for every two men.

*Established in 2002, the NMTT has to date provided the country with 11,000 homes — and this week-long project will see 900 people housed.*

As the volunteers were bussed in

from nearby Cape Town on Saturday — Human Rights Day in

Africa — local residents sang, cheered and waved banners.

Imelda Lynch, owner of the Long Dock seafood restaurant in west Clare, is one of the volunteers.

### Trip

She said some of her friends went on a previous trip and recommended the experience, so she decided to raise the €5,000 she needed to join the team.

Wicklow mum-of-four Mari Humby left her kids, the youngest of whom is just four years old, in the care of close family and came over with her husband Pdraig after they were moved by a documentary on the region's poverty.

*DUBLINER Jenny Hayes is a seasoned volunteer, having taken part in a build in November 2007.*

"It was brilliant," she said. "It's good to be part of something that makes a small difference.

"The feeling lasts a long time."



**DIGGING INTO IT:** Mari Humby and Imelda Lynch are two of 300 female Irish volunteers