Homeless appeal

BY OLIVIA LAMBERT

It’s hard to imagine the discomfort homeless people feel in their daily lives.

But Xavier High School students tried to understand when they shut off their heaters last week. Students wrapped themselves in blankets and scarves, which were later donated to St Vincent de Paul, as the school organised no-heater day leading up to its third annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout. Xavier was the first school in NSW to take part in the event in 2012 and what started with only 20 participants has turned into 70 this year. The school has already raised $2500 for the cause.

Students Emma Aldrich, 18, and Dom Beer, 17, are organising the sleepout as they have become aware of the rate of youth homelessness on the Border. They have encouraged students to bring toiletries to school to make care packs for the needy.

“We are aware of a lot of youth homelessness and as teenagers ourselves, it hits us close to home and we can relate to it,” Emma said. “There are people out there our age struggling.”

Dom said the event would raise awareness of events in Albury. “Homelessness doesn’t just happen in big places like Melbourne and Sydney,” she said.

“It’s alive here and we are raising empathy by experiencing a little bit of discomfort for one day. It helps to show us the struggle these people may go through for sometimes their whole lives.”

The girls were overwhelmed by how the whole school had backed the cause of homelessness.