Local campaign - Students pitch in for homeless

By Erin Handley

OUT of the classroom has emerged a generous spirit that will warm Tamworth's most needy residents.

McCarthy students Emily Reid and Gillian Mauger were part of a class of 30 students who decided to gather goods for the Tamworth Women's Refuge.

It was while learning about family and community for their studies that the pair understood the reasons why people were rendered homeless and what they could do to make a difference.

"Homelessness is never a choice," Ms Mauger said.

"It doesn't mean just being on the street. A lot are domestic violence victims who don't get time to pack."

From delving into the subject, the students were inspired to give.

Ms Reid said a collection of toiletries, clothes, books, pillows and blankets was handed to Tamworth Family Support Services.

"We were in a position to do something to help ... our class wanted to donate to people who really need it most," she said.

While the goods were being handed over to the worthy cause, country music sweetheart Aleyce Simmonds and FM92.9 presenter Che "Rebs" Gadenne were announced as ambassadors for Tamworth Family Support Services.

While both will undoubtedly use their high profiles to raise awareness for Tamworth's homeless, they have signalled they do not want to be lofty ambassadors – they want to work on the ground and get their hands dirty.

"I am passionate about the hands-on role, being out on the streets and helping kids and families experiencing homelessness," Ms Simmonds said.

Mr Gadenne said domestic violence had been a big focus for him behind the microphone for the past two years, and he wanted to do everything he could to end the scourge that sees local police receive seven distressed calls every day.

"I have a background of domestic violence as a kid, and many years ago I didn't speak out, and the outcome of that was quite extreme. The more men stand up, the greater chance we have of success," he said.