

HOME BEAUTIFUL:
Ovens and King
Builders' Lachie Gales
will go from building
designer homes
by day, to sleeping
rough tonight, to raise
awareness about
youth homelessness.

PHOTO: Luke Plummer



Change doesn't have to come from 'bread and butter activism'

By ANITA McPHERSON

WHILE some of us dream about one day designing and building our own home, it's worth sparing a thought for those whose only dream is to have somewhere safe to sleep and a roof over their heads.

That's exactly what members of the business community, including Lachie Gales from Ovens and King Builders, will be doing when they take part in North East Support and Action for Youth (NESAY) community leaders' sleepout tonight.

For Mr Gales who has lived in the local community all his life and raised his four children here, it's about recognising how blessed he and his family are to have each other and to live in a wonderful place.

He said to know that there are young people out there who are

struggling, and that 42 per cent of all homeless people nationwide were under 25, was confronting, and something the whole community needed to be aware of.

"You take a lot of stuff for granted when you raise kids in terms of security, education, sport - and to think there are young people who because of their homelessness are denied those opportunities, is really confronting," he said.

"We want a fair go for everyone as a community - so it wasn't a hard cause to get on board with."

Mr Gales said he was also looking forward to learning more about youth homelessness from the NESAY sleepout, and his daughter who is a social worker working with young people will also be coming along.

"We don't sit around the dinner table talking social issues, we're not bread

and butter activists, but I guess you don't have to be," he said.

"You've just got to have a heart, commitment to community and empathy for these young people that are denied opportunities due to the fact they're sleeping rough."

Mr Gales said his business was pleased to be able to support a number of important community initiatives and the sleepout was a campaign that fitted well with its key value of community leadership.

The NESAY community leaders' sleepout will be held at 90 Rowan Street where participants will be finding a bit of floor space and spending the night the way hundreds of young people in the community do every day.

To find out more call NESAY on 5720 2201, with money raised through the initiative going towards the provision of services for homeless youth.