



Safe and warm: Lisa Clark co-invented the Backpack Bed for the homeless.

Picture: Rob Carew

Swag of the future

By **Jessica Bennett**

A WARM, dry bed, can make a big difference to homeless people, says Knoxfield business owner Lisa Clark.

She has been invited as a speaker to the 2010 Creative Innovation Conference in Melbourne for co-inventing an emergency relief swag for the homeless, the Backpack Bed.

Since 2007, Mrs Clark has worked with 42 Melbourne char-

ities to give away more than 400 Backpack Beds to street-sleeping homeless people.

“People are sleeping under bridges and in alleyways every night,” she said.

“While the government says it is working to solve homelessness, that doesn’t solve the problem of ‘What do I do tonight?’ for people on the street.”

The waterproof swag rolls up into a backpack during the day.

“It only weighs four kilograms

so people can carry it with them,” Mrs Clark said. “The backpacks are actually more useful and more cost-effective than handing out blankets because they’re waterproof.”

Mrs Clark was looking forward to hearing ideas from other innovators at the 2010 Creative Innovation Conference.

At the conference, speakers will discuss the role of innovation in tackling challenges of the future.