

OUTER EAST

Cash a help for scalps

OUTER-EAST women having breast cancer treatment will be given a lift thanks to a new service coming to Maroonadah Hospital early next year.

Eastern Health will become the first public health provider in Victoria to offer a free scalp cooling service to patients to help prevent hair loss during chemotherapy.

The Coolheads campaign aims to raise \$145,000 to buy two scalp cooling machines, which would service four women at once.

Ringwood East mum and paramedic Belinda Canteri, who was diagnosed with breast cancer last year and is now in remission, said it



Coolheads campaigners Belinda Canteri and Jane Johnson want to raise \$145,000 to support women having breast cancer treatment. Picture: STEVE TANNER

wasn't about being superficial – it was about dignity.

She said there were limited options for those undergoing treatment, with wigs often costing upwards of \$400 and sometimes melting under cafe heaters.

"It is only hair and it grows back but until you've gone

through it you just can't possibly know how upsetting it is," Ms Canteri said.

"It's a constant reminder there is no escape, that your body is being poisoned and is filled with chemicals to prevent you dying."

Eastern Health Foundation acting director Caro-

lyn Schuwalow agreed it would help women maintain some privacy and normality throughout the often traumatic time.

The foundation and Bendigo Community Bank are running the Coolheads campaign through October and November.