Bushfire appeal letter pulls at heartstrings

FOR seven-year-old Jazzy Dalton, working out how to spell Melbourne proved a challenge - it came out as Melmen.

Despite her spelling error, the compassion of a letter someone so young had been so touched by the fires. She put it in an envelope and gave it to her teacher who handed it on to me.

“What struck me was how young she was and how scared she was. I felt, honest and innocent. Jazzy’s letter gives an indication of how we were not lost. It read (verbatim): “Pastor Peter, could we donate money for the people in Melmen in the fires so they can replace everything that got burnt. Thank you,” Jazzy Dalton.”

Mr Janetzi said: “Jazzy wrote the letter in the week after the 9/11, 2001, and the 2004 Asian tsunami. “With 9/11, the students seemed more scared than anything else and because the tsunami hit during the Christmas school holidays, they didn’t really talk about it at school,” he said. “This has hit home hard because it is in Australia and lots of the students have relatives and friends in Victoria. It’s more tangible.”

A quietly spoken Year Three student, Jazzy was embarrassed when, during a school offering service yesterday, she was singled out by Mr Janetzi for her letter.

“I was a bit shy because my letter was up on a screen and everyone could see it. I felt proud too though,” Jazzy said.

“I wrote the letter myself because I thought at school we could all help. Then the people could replace everything that got wrecked.”

To date, the 850 students of Good Shepherd, a Prep to Year 12 school, have raised more than $3000 for the bushfire appeal. Most of the funds were made through student offerings.

EMOTION ON SHOW: Jazzy Dalton and Peter Janetzi.