

NEWS

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Lighting up tech

TECHNOLOGY being used to create and innovate was the lesson for pupils at St Joseph's School in Chelsea over the school holidays.

Prep students and siblings took part in half-day electronic workshops on Tuesday 29 September and worked on fun projects to make lights with dimmer and pulse functions, fans and buzzers.

The Bright Sparks workshops featured electronic bricks provided by Sydney-based BrainCrank.

Rebecca Zosel, mother of 6-year-old prep pupil Oscar, organised the workshops.

"I wanted the children to have a fun and hands-on experience to get them excited about science and technology," she said.

"The electronics are as easy to build with as Lego so the kids loved using them. For me, the best part was seeing them thinking about how electronics are used in everyday life."

Or as Oscar put it: "Those pieces that I played with, they use them in the big electronic things."

Ms Zosel said the BrainCrank workshops built on the imaginations and ideas children have amid an atmosphere where anything was possible.

"The children started thinking about the inputs and outputs of everyday items like the lights in their classroom and the fan on the ceiling. Some of the mystery disappeared. It got them thinking 'I know how that works. I can make that!'"

Bright sparks: Lucy Malcolmson and Oscar Zosel at St Josephs Primary School Chelsea with electronic equipment they put together. Picture: Gary Sissons

Crime 'out of control'

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A SURGE of 9.3 per cent in crime in Kingston in the past year, including a 150 per cent jump in abductions, has been blamed on state government cuts to police numbers and fewer station opening hours, along with weaker bail laws.

"Crime is completely out of control in Kingston and Victoria under Labor," Liberal state Upper House MP for the South Eastern Metropolitan Region Inga Peulich said.

"Labor takes Kingston for granted."

The crime statistics, delayed by the weekend's AFL Grand Final, reveal that, for the year ending June, a record 11,221 offences were reported in Kingston compared to 10,268 a year ago.

The 953 rise in offences includes an "alarming" 75.2 per cent surge in sexual offences, as well as a 23.2 per cent rise in burglary, 21.3 per cent in robbery, 18.8 per cent in dangerous acts and 18.2 per cent in theft, Ms Peulich said.

In comparison, crime in Frankston is up 12.5 per cent, while the Mornington Peninsula's reported crime rate is up 9.6

per cent for the same period.

In Frankston, sex offences increased by 70 per cent, burglary and break-and-enter was up 24.6 per cent, and drug dealing and trafficking was up almost 25 per cent.

Of the 79 local government areas in the state, 75 had more crime over the past 12 months.

Frankston Labor MP Paul Edbrooke said the government had given police new powers and more resources to crack down on violent crime, youth offending and family violence.

"There are more operations and target-

ed efforts to catch criminals, with police making more arrests and charging more offenders," he said.

Operation Cosmas has made more than 180 arrests in a crackdown on violent crime since May, including catching ringleaders.

Mr Edbrooke said 19 protective services officers at Frankston police station are helping free police from their desks and get them "back on the beat".

He said "tough" laws introduced this year would combat rising numbers of carjackings and home invasions.

- with Liz Bell