

KEILOR EAST



MOLAR POWER: Students at Lincolnville Kindergarten in Keilor East received a visit from the Tooth Fairy last week as part of a free dental initiative by Smile Solutions to educate children on how to properly care for their teeth and gums. Joshua, 5, and Annie, 4 got to play dress-up and check on the health of the Tooth Fairy's own chompers. Picture: DAVID SMITH N23BM809

BRIMBANK

Car thieves on notice

SAVE YOUR CAR

- Park in well-lit and busy areas
- Hide your valuables from sight or remove them from the car
- Install an immobiliser or security system
- Never leave your car running or unlocked - even at home
- Try to park your car in the driveway or in a garage at home, not on the street
- Don't leave a spare key hidden on your car
- Report suspicious activity to police
- Phone Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000

TASKFORCE TO INVESTIGATE LINKS TO ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS

Caitlin Ryan

A TASKFORCE will be set up to tackle car thefts across Melbourne's northwest.

Taskforce Rio will target and investigate suspected organised crime groups involved in the theft of cars and identify tactics used to profit from car thefts.

The announcement comes as the latest crime statistics show increases in theft of motor vehicle offences, particularly in the northwest region.

Brimbank has long been the state's car theft capital.

In the 12 months to September 30 this year, 1201 cars were reported stolen in the municipality. In the same period, car theft jumped by 41 per cent in Wyndham, 36.9 per cent in Hobsons Bay, and 25.4 per cent in Maribyrnong. The statewide increase was 7.6 per cent.

The region accounts for 51 per cent of car thefts, with 8133 vehicles stolen across the northwest, out of 16,002 statewide.

Commander Jeff Forti said he expected the taskforce to significantly

disrupt the groups responsible for the emerging trend of car thefts.

"We believe that the increase in car thefts in our region is related to the operation of organised crime groups who are attempting to gain profit from these thefts," he said.

"Taskforce Rio will specifically hone in on these groups - to detect, disrupt and prosecute.

"Whilst we recover many stolen vehicles, organised crime motivated by profit appears to be the reasoning behind the vehicles that

are not being recovered.

"We believe these groups are rebirthing vehicles, trading second-hand vehicle parts and selling the rest for scrap metal."

Drivers are urged to always lock their cars and park in well-lit, busy areas.

The taskforce will operate throughout the entire northwest metropolitan region, and is expected to start in the coming weeks.

How does Brimbank fare when it comes to crime? Turn to page 25 for the latest Victoria Police crime statistics.

fast lane

Uniforms granted

DEER Park Football and Sunshine Baseball clubs will receive \$1000 as part of the State Government's Sporting Uniform Grants Program, which will help to provide new uniforms for the teams. Across Victoria, 286 clubs will share in \$277,500 of funding from the program.

Watering rules

SIMPLIFIED permanent water use rules will come into effect from December 1, providing residents with greater flexibility for outdoor watering. Gardens can be watered at any time using a hand-held hose, while watering systems can only be used between 6pm-10am. Windows can be washed using a hand-held hose fitted with a trigger nozzle.

Young achievers

ST Albans' Luke Falzon has been nominated for the Seward Dawson Community Service and Volunteering Award. Part of the Victorian Young Achiever Awards, they aim to reward and promote the positive achievements of young Victorians up to the age of 28. Winners will be announced at an awards gala held at Etihad Stadium in April.

From graffiti to art

BRIMBANK will benefit from a \$24,700 Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grant. Member for Western Metropolitan Region, Andrew Elsbury, said the funding will go towards the B-Creative Urban Art Aerosol Project which will run weekly workshops to help young people transfer to legal art.

Library reading

BRIMBANK libraries are inviting children 5-16 to take part in this year's Summer Reading Club. This year's theme is Untangled Tales focusing on multicultural folk and fairy tales, myths and legends. Registration is December 1-January 25. For more details go to: brimbanklibraries.vic.gov.au

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