

Siblings star in science awards

RUBY KRANER-TUCCI

SIBLING duo Rebecca Paratz (year 6) and Leon Paratz (year 9), recently placed as winner and semi-finalist respectively in their individual age categories at the BHP Billiton Foundation Science and Engineering Awards.

The prestigious accolades celebrates the creativity of school students using science and engineering to improve society.

Rebecca was also named the primary school winner for engineering. Her design, the “Multi Walker”, transforms an ordinary walking frame to promote greater accessibility for elderly people. Rebecca combined syringes, water and tubing to form a squeezable trigger that enables individuals to climb stairs and walk on ramps and uneven surfaces with ease.

Rebecca’s inspiration stemmed from witnessing the struggles of her grandmother. “We cannot take her to many restaurants because she cannot get inside. This is sometimes due to one little step that she is unable to climb,” she remarked. “That is why I invented the Multi Walker, so people don’t have to feel limited.”

Leon also drew on personal experience in his design, “Backward



Rebecca and Leon Paratz.

Vision Ski Goggles”, which aims to make skiing, a family favourite activity, safer for his loved ones. The worry of being implicated in potentially harmful accidents when being hit from behind was the driving force of his invention.

After various concepts and ideas, Leon chose a model that mimicked the rear vision mirror of a car, which also serves to prevent collision. “My project aims to warn the skier or snowboarder of imminent danger by giving them a wider field of vision,” he stated. “This means they can safely avoid a collision, saving themselves and giving an out-of-control skier or snowboarder time to recover. Nobody has eyes in the back of their head!”