LED downlight interference problems solved

Some time ago, I wrote to you regarding LED lights that were installed in my kitchen interfering with the TV reception on my Topfield set-top box (STB) feeding a Sony rear projection analog TV. Until now, we just had to put up with it.

The Topfield STB gave up the ghost and as they're out of business, I bought a new STB, a Teac, for $58.00 rather that get a new TV, since a similar one to what we have would cost approximately $1500.

As the STB was brand new and the problem was still there, I rang Teac's help line and one of their "technicians" suggested some new automated channel searches that did not fix the problem; he said that the STB was OK.

So I contacted a local antenna company and their representative knew of this problem. Using a signal strength meter, he found that the LEDs in the kitchen have a noise/hash output that affects TV broadcasts that are around 150-170MHz, to which the Teac STB was tuned, using the auto search.

He manually tuned the TV stations in the STB to UHF frequencies above 550Mhz — problem solved! The Teac "technician" made no such suggestion.

These LEDs also affect FM broadcasts above 100MHz and I use an analog TV aerial that is wired to the antenna system within our home for picking up FM broadcasts.

The antenna man said that as I was using the analog antenna to supply the FM receiver, to leave it there, otherwise he would suggest I remove it.

The offending LEDs came from Kogan, and another LED installed in the room with the TV, a Philips one, has very little or no hash output. So I'm going to ditch the Kogan LEDs and replace them with Philips units, despite the TV tuning being OK anyway.

Apparently, some LEDs have "No RF interference" printed on the packaging but the Philips one doesn't have this. Anyway, looking out for LEDs that are marked might be a good idea in future.

The average punter wouldn't have a signal strength meter but if you know the solution, you can tune to the higher TV frequencies manually.

Ian Stewart,
Glenhaven, NSW.