

MEDIA RELEASE



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Zero tolerance on arson

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NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said today the arrest of a member on arson charges shows the Service has a zero tolerance to arson.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons has confirmed the arrest of an 18 year old man from Sydney's south-west following a joint operation by the Police and NSW RFS.

He said the man had been a volunteer member for seven months and has immediately been stood down.

"Firefighters are trusted members of society and it's extremely disappointing that from time to time, people seek to abuse that trust," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"We have a zero tolerance for arson and this arrest shows our determination and commitment to bringing to justice anyone engaged in this kind of behaviour.

"Arson is not only dangerous, it's criminal – and we won't tolerate it.

"Once the NSW RFS became aware of suspicions, we went directly to Police and we've worked closely with Police to assist them in bringing charges."

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said strict processes are in place to identify suspects within the Service.

"Anyone wishing to join the Service must undergo a criminal history record check.

"They'll then be subject to the scrutiny of fellow brigade members before being accepted as a full member.

"As is often the case in these situations, it's our own members who raise concerns and report them to the Police.

"We also have a dedicated police liaison officer working at our headquarters, to assist us with investigating these types of incidents and importantly, educating our own members about what to look for.

"We also have an RFS intelligence analyst working within the Police State Crime Command Property Crime Squad to assist with investigations."

No further comment can be made as the matter is now before the courts.

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