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The Mercury

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Flames fascinated firebug

- by: DAVID KILLICK Crime Editor
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Allan David Broadhead, 30, of Campbell Town.

Source: News Corp Australia

A FORMER volunteer firefighter who lit five fires in three days helped fight the blazes, the Supreme Court has heard.

Labradoodle handler Allan David Broadhead, 30, of Campbell Town, pleaded guilty to five counts of unlawfully setting fire to vegetation and five counts of setting fire in a protected area.

Crown Prosecutor Bradley Wagg told the court Broadhead lit the fires at Epping Forest during a spell of hot, windy and dry weather between December 13 and 15 last year.

The accused climbed over a fence at his workplace and lit the first fire nearby with a cigarette lighter before alerting his employer and helping to put it out.

The next day he lit a second and third fire nearby, both of which were also quickly extinguished.

On December 14 Broadhead lit another fire in some gorse bushes after leaving work.

He drove away but doubled back and called triple-0 and took a photo of the fire on his mobile phone.

The fire burned through 67ha and was not contained for several hours and caused disruptions to traffic on the Midland Highway, the court heard.

He lit a final fire near his workplace the following morning.

When interviewed by investigating police, Broadhead admitted starting the fires but was unable to explain why.

“I don’t know. It was just one of those things I sometimes do and don’t know why,” he said.

The court heard Broadhead had prior convictions for stealing underwear and mailing them back to their owners with notes attached

Defence lawyer Steven Chopping said his client has been a volunteer firefighter for 10 years with brigades in Risdon Vale, Claremont and Magra, and had a fascination with fires.

Justice Shan Tennent will sentence Broadhead on July 31.

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Suspended jail term for firebug Allan David Broadhead

- by: PATRICK BILLINGS
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A FORMER volunteer firefighter filmed a bushfire on his phone and told police he had been “chasing fire lighters”.

But in fact Campbell Town’s Allan David Broadhead, who worked as a labradoodle handler, had lit five fires over three days in Epping Forest last December.

The 32-year-old pleaded guilty in the Supreme Court in Hobart to lighting the fires and breaching permit periods.

One fire was significant in size and kept Tasmania Fire Service crews busy for most of a day, Justice Shan Tennent said this morning.

When interviewed by police, who suspected his involvement, Broadhead said he liked “seeing the flames and thought it was a bit of fun”.

He claimed he had been a volunteer firefighter for a decade.

Justice Tennent said Broadhead, a recently convicted stalker, was aware the weather was hot and windy when he lit the fires.

She said his offending was potentially dangerous to residents, employees and the animals he cared for.

“Your offending seems to be born out of boredom,” she said.

Broadhead was sentenced to six months’ jail, wholly suspended, and ordered to carry out 150 hours of community service.

Justice Tennent said he must pay more than \$13,000 in compensation to Tasrail.

