

# Firebug `yearned to be on fire truck'

The Examiner Newspaper

2/10/2009 3:06:00 PM

MELBOURNE - A volunteer firefighter who lit three bushfires and made hoax triple-zero calls yearned to be on the back of a fire truck, a court has been told.

Jarred William Brewer, 20, sat red-faced and crying in the dock during his pre-sentence hearing yesterday.

The Melbourne County Court heard the junior Country Fire Authority firefighter lit three bushfires north of Melbourne and made 16 hoax emergency calls between November 2008 and January this year.

Brewer called triple-zero to report fictitious fires and car crashes, and hid his identity by removing the SIM card in his mobile phone.

Forensic psychologist Dr Jeffrey Cummins gave evidence that Brewer was of low intelligence and his crimes were a way to big-note himself and boost his self-esteem.

Defence lawyer Sharon Lacy said her client did not commit his crimes out of malice.

She said he simply wanted to be called out by the CFA and had never attended a bushfire.

"Mr Brewer was hoping to be involved in this team of firefighters that got to put out the fire or at least be on a truck somewhere that attended," she said.

Brewer pleaded guilty to three counts of intentionally causing a bushfire and 16 of improperly using emergency call services.

Investigators matched his fingerprints to ignition items left at one of the scenes.

Receipt records from the local Safeway store - where Brewer bought flammable items - also matched items found at another fire scene.

Judge Anthony Duckett ordered Brewer be assessed for a sentence in a youth justice centre. He will be sentenced at a date to be fixed.