



# News Release



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## Strike Force Vulcan

WA Police will target about 40 known arsonists and patrol areas identified as “high risk” as part of Strike Force Vulcan, a strategy to reduce deliberately lit bushfires this season.

There were more than 5,250 bushfires reported across WA last season of which 50 per cent were deemed deliberate or suspicious. Of these, 65 per cent (1,706) were lit in the metropolitan area.

A recent report by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that WA had the highest incidence of suspicious and deliberate bushfires in the nation.

Commissioner Karl O’Callaghan says bushfire arson results in large costs for the community in terms of loss of life, injury and significant property damage.

“Strike Force Vulcan aims to reduce the risk to the community this summer by preventing some of these deliberately lit bushfires as well as those caused by reckless behaviour,” he said.

The strategy follows a recommendation from the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission for a pro-active police intervention plan similar to South Australia’s successful Operation Nomad.

Strike Force Vulcan will identify and target prolific priority arsonists and rate them as high, medium or low risk of re-offending.

Police will conduct dedicated patrols across the metropolitan area including a number of high risk locations identified as being prone to deliberately lit bushfires.

These patrols will be stepped up on days where the fire risk classification is “extreme” or “catastrophic” and include aerial surveillance by the Police Airwing.

“It’s hoped this high police visibility will raise community awareness and deter deliberate acts of arson or accidental or negligent fire-starting behaviour,” Mr O’Callaghan said.

“WA Police support FESA in our emergency co-ordination capacity and it’s hoped a rapid, effective response to outbreaks of fire this season will reduce the impact on the community.”

The bushfire season runs from December 1, 2011 until March 31, 2012.

Sue Short  
Commissioner’s Media Advisor  
December 1, 2011