



**Mark Speakman**

Attorney General

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

**Shelley Hancock**

Minister for Local Government

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **BRUSH WITH FAME FOR SHANE FITZSIMMONS**

Former NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons is being honoured with a large-scale mural to celebrate the launch of Graffiti Removal Day 2021.

Attorney General Mark Speakman unveiled the work by renowned [street artist Sid Tapia](#), who painted the Erskineville Railway Station mural to pay tribute to Resilience NSW Commissioner Fitzsimmons, and the brave efforts of the RFS.

“Our volunteer fireies and other emergency services showed remarkable bravery in battling the ferocious 2019/20 bushfires that ravaged NSW. Their heroism and the leadership of their Commissioner is very deserving of recognition,” Mr Speakman said.

“COVID-19 has reminded us of the importance of our homes and taking pride in our precious neighbourhoods. Graffiti Removal Day is the time to pick up a brush and reconnect with your local community in a COVID safe way.”

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said she could not think of someone more worthy of this lasting tribute.

“There is universal respect for former Commissioner Fitzsimmons, particularly down in my community on the South Coast who experienced firsthand the devastating effects of the bushfires last summer,” Mrs Hancock said.

“I encourage councils and community groups across the State to roll up their sleeves and get involved in this worthwhile event.”

Commissioner Fitzsimmons, the 2021 NSW Australian of the Year, said he was humbled by the artwork, and encouraged people across NSW to volunteer for Graffiti Removal Day on Sunday 28 March 2021.

“Volunteers are at the heart of Australian communities. I will forever be grateful to the volunteers who stood up to be counted during the worst bushfire season we’ve ever had. We saw courage and commitment from volunteers who continually put the wellbeing of their community before themselves,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“2020 was a year like no other and many are still dealing with the impacts of drought, bushfires, floods and storms, and COVID-19. In the face of these challenges, it is our community spirit that empowers us to rebuild, recover and begin to heal.”

Graffiti Removal Day calls for people to show pride in their local community by volunteering to remove graffiti in compliance with COVID safe guidelines.

Illegal graffiti costs the State more than \$300 million in clean-up expenses each year.

Graffiti Removal Day Chairman Bob Aitken said this year up to 3,000 volunteers are expected to remove illegal graffiti from approximately 600 sites around NSW.

“Since we began in 2012, volunteers have removed more than 141,000sqm of graffiti, saving the community \$10.4 million,” Mr Aitken said.

People can volunteer or nominate a clean-up site at [www.graffitiremovalday.org.au](http://www.graffitiremovalday.org.au).