

Council

**MOUNT BARKER STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES  
– REQUEST FOR VEHICLE**

**MBSES Letter of Request**

**Meeting Date: 1 December 2020**

**Number of Pages : 3**



## **Mt Barker State Emergency Service Western Australia**

### **Mt Barker State Emergency Service Inc.**

Operations and Training Centre/DFES State Storm Cache  
39 Ormond Rd, Mt Barker, WA 6324  
mtbarker.ses@gmail.com : 0448 511 127

Dear Shire of Plantagenet Councillors,

The Mt Barker SES is the primary unit for any natural hazard emergency operation for Mt Barker, Tenderten, Cranbrook, Narrikup, and the Porongurup National Park. We also provide support to the surrounding localities of Denmark, Gnowangerup and Mt Barker. Operating between two mountain ranges, terrain is challenging, and operations often require the team to walk many more kilometres than necessary due to vehicle access issues. DBCA firebreaks are narrow, access routes are often steep and overhung by large trees. These access roads are subject to water erosion in winter, and can be a dangerous firetrap in summer operations without excellent vehicle manoeuvrability.

In addition to our primary operational responsibilities, the Mt Barker SES also houses the DFES State Operations Storm Cache – an invaluable resource to remote units. The Mt Barker team are prepared to deploy the storm cache to surrounding districts when required. In the most recent Great Southern storm event, Mt Barker delivered over 1000 sandbags to Albany SES as they had deployed all their own sandbags. 2020 has been a year of unusual storm events, often overextending the resources of local units. The strategic location of the Mt Barker storm cache has been used in previous years as well, delivering to Wagin and surrounds on multiple occasions. In addition it offers Plantagenet shire access to bulk emergency supplies that can be deployed quickly without travel or delivery time.

All possible efforts are made on behalf of the Mt Barker unit to mitigate storm impacts prior to the arrival of severe weather events. These include communicating with the State Operations OIC in preparation of deployment, pre-empting an operation by organising a roster, and ensuring the vehicle and equipment are ready for deployment. This includes ensuring there are enough operational members available to manage local incidents, and deployment of storm cache materials.

This kind of mitigation is made extremely difficult when vehicle numbers are insufficient to the unit's operational requirements. During the aforementioned storm, the Mt Barker CESM had to deploy their vehicle for delivery of the sandbags to Albany. Not only is the Mt Barker truck required for local Mt Barker operations, but as a body build it is unsuited to storm cache deployment. It can not tow a trailer, and it does not have room in its layout to carry coreflute or large rolls of plastic. Essentially the truck is suited to local operations only, and it is not even well suited to those.

As previously explained, the national parks pose access challenges that become potentially lethal hazards during weather extremes, and the truck is the wrong type of vehicle to manoeuvre safely in those environments. Its size and cumbersome nature make it hazardous in the mountains.

In summary, the Mt Barker SES unit holds an essential, strategic position for the region both as a unit, and as a storm cache. Our unit responsibilities are not just affixed to local operations, but include deployment of storm cache materials. Not only is our current vehicle not appropriate to



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storm cache deployment, it is required to support operations for the local area of responsibility and cannot be deployed for extended periods out of region. It also poses access issues to many types of terrain.

We are writing to you today with the specific request to be able to use the vehicle currently assigned to shire of Plantagenet CESM Mike Barnes, which is due to be replaced in the coming months. It is a 2015 Isuzu D-Max with 87600 kilometres, outfitted with beacons, a WAERN radio and a covered tray and a tow ball. This vehicle would be ideal for our purposes, improving our capacity to support Plantagenet, and the surrounding district far more safely, quickly and efficiently. We have made application to DFES for a second vehicle on many occasions, however they are extremely reluctant to issue vehicles to any units. The State Operations Cache captain Lyndon Jackson is trying to acquire a vehicle for our unit, however he does not think it is likely that DFES will countenance purchasing one for us.

If it were possible for the current CESM vehicle to be loaned from the shire to the Mt Barker SES to use until a General Purpose Utility is eventually provided by DFES, this will improve the overall safety of the regions by allowing for appropriate risk mitigation before all severe weather activities, and timely and efficient deployment of DFES storm cache equipment within the regional districts. If we are unable to obtain a second vehicle for our unit, this could result in slow, or even no possible deployment of the Mt Barker storm cache materials. There are potential risks to lives and property that can be easily avoided if we can invest appropriately in a vehicle.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kind Regards,

***Kirsten Beidatsch***

**Unit Manager Mt Barker SES  
mbmanager.ses@gmail.com  
0417 904 059**



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