



Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

30 December 2020

Critical rescue equipment stolen from Upper Yarra SES

A serious theft has taken place at VICSES' Upper Yarra unit, with critical rescue equipment among the items stolen.

Several chainsaws and a set of road rescue hydraulics, valued at around \$20,000 and funded by the unit through local fundraising, were taken from the Warburton Hwy premises in Wesburn in the early hours of Wednesday (30 December).

The incident risks our volunteer's ability to provide appropriate storm response and road rescue services during a vital time of year. Severe thunderstorms are likely in the coming days whilst the festive period is notorious for road accidents.

The theft of one of only two sets of road rescue hydraulics essentially means if multiple people are trapped in a road accident, the responders can now only do one at a time.

It is understood that the unit's alarm system had a fault and was in the process of being replaced.

The VICSES Upper Yarra Unit have responded to a total of **342** requests for assistance in the past 12 months.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Quotes attributable to Upper Yarra Deputy Unit Controller Cam McDonald

"We're really devastated. After the year we've all had, it's just a really frustrating way to end the year. Hopefully someone realises this is pretty specialist equipment and doesn't have much broader use and they just return it"

"Ultimately it's the community that suffers, road safety is just so important this time of year. So right now we'll have less equipment to respond with if something happens"

For more information, contact:

VICSES State Media Duty Officer (6am-10pm)

Phone: 1300 783 933

Email: media@ses.vic.gov.au