

CFSVA AGM 2020 Presidents report

Firstly I would like to thank Sonia, Kirsti, David, Jeff and the Management committee for all their work, support and encouragement during the last year. Without all the work and support our association could not function. The management of our association is and needs to be a team effort.

To say that last year has been a challenge would be somewhat of an understatement. The list of challenges include,

New Chief Officer

Extensive interstate deployments

Large local fires, Yorktown, Cuddly Creek and KI

The usual mix of self-interest driven people

Until recently an unsupportive political environment

And then let's toss in COVID with all its associated disruptions and fears

I read somewhere "that a person's strength comes from the way they deal with adversity" if this is true for the singular then surely it is also the case for our association. I suggest that we have, at least while I have been involved, never been stronger or more unified. Of course our situation is not perfect and there is still a mountain of work to do, but perhaps we could take a minute and acknowledge that progress has been made. I offer 3 examples,

Relationship with CFS executive is very strong with the view to having influence in the shaping of the organization into the future.

Most items in our "Policy Book" now completed, under way or no longer relevant

The maturing relationship with the UFU executive, based on communication, cooperation and in time I am sure, collaboration on matters of mutual interest, benefit or concern.

The world is changing, I would suggest that none of us understand fully what things will look like in 1, 5 or 10yrs time, and there maybe not much we can do about it anyway. Emergency services and CFS in particular are also changing, this we can have an influence on. It would be reasonable to suggest that the association may need to also change to remain current and relevant. In 2017 I wrote in a report,

"We are by our very nature as emergency service responders a reactionary organization, be it fire, RCR or a political fight, and we do it well.

It is very important that we learn and practise strategic thinking as well.

It is also important that we learn to recognise opportunities so as to advance the interests of volunteers and to secure the future of our community based organization when they arise."

In this regard, nothing has changed, we still need to be very strategic in planning our future. With that in mind and with consultation the management committee we will be developing a picture of what members want and expect from the association and CFS and a set of policies and positions to drive us along that pathway.

Andy Wood