

CFSVA AGM 2017

President's report

Firstly I would like to thank Sonia, Kirsti and the Management committee for all their work, support and encouragement since our last meeting. I also welcome Jeff to the management committee, as Lower North Branch President. Along with that I thank Ray for his work over his term as branch President and recognise that Ray has taken up a delegate position in the Lower North Branch so will continue to work with the CFSVA team.

The management of our association is and needs to be a team effort.

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.

Last year we developed our basic strategic plan, and in the time since have been fleshing out that plan and are in the process of putting the information collected from members around the state into an updated positions document.

The basic role of the management committee/board is to work through and develop a position on matters brought to the committee by the branch presidents who are encouraged to put their positions in the strongest possible way.

As chairman I take very seriously the need for professional separation within the management committee, as difficult as it can be, committee members must put aside their feelings and friendships when making decisions.

From time to time the board's position may not be the same as the branch position.

Branch Presidents must support the board's position back to their branches.

We need to be unified.

Whether we like it or not, we operate in a political environment, and everyone has seen that disunity in any political arena is death.

Every time when someone goes out and says or writes things,

Like suggesting we are about to be taken over by the UFU

Like suggesting the exec is sitting around having coffee with the minister

Like stirring up debate about Victoria and the UFU

Like suggesting the reform process is on again

Like suggesting the VA is doing nothing

Like suggesting the VA is in the pocket of CFS

Every time this happens we are sending our opposition and the government a message that we are scared of them and inviting them to do us over.

I am simply saying it is pathetic for us to be taking actions that empower our opposition.

We can learn something from the UFU,

Some of their strength comes from their unity.

They don't air their laundry in public.

They don't broadcast their strategic plans.

While I acknowledge that one of our major strengths comes from our diversity, we must be unified in our strategic approach.

This might be an odd way of looking at things, but one of the best things to happen to us was Piccolo's failed reform process.

It provided opportunities for us to advance the interests of our volunteers.

It gave us the knowledge and experience to help deal with the next attack on our organization.

It increased our level of strength and respect, politically, publicly, within CFS and nationally.

Strategically thinking,

Throughout history, major battles are never won from a defensive position.

Historically, when attacked by the UFU, CFS has defended itself.

I suggest to you, this is a dangerous tactic, and one that may not work next time, taking into account that we are the only state not controlled by the UFU.

Would we not be better off taking the lead position whenever possible, identifying and actioning opportunities to strengthen our position both in SA and nationally?

As we are all aware, the association's resources, human and financial are very limited.

Wherever possible we need to use others to do the work for us.

I do not believe there is any doubt that our strongest position to deal with any future attack on us is to have the most modern, best equipped, highly trained to national standards, most professional, seamless organization that we can.

While I understand some volunteers are uncomfortable with change, change we must.

Some of these changes are,

Review of regional opps

New uniform

Training being driven by opps

Alignment with AFAC standards

Professionalization of the service

All of these changes have challenges and opportunities, we need to work through the challenges and grab these opportunities to advance our organization.

Andy Wood

CFSVA President