



Australasian Road Rescue Organisation Inc.

ABN: 54155711735

Website: www.arro.org.au

Email: arro@arro.org.au

Mail: PO Box 467, Cannonvale, Qld, 4802, Australia

President: Mark Roche

Contact: Steve Rothwell (Executive Officer) 0407 629 205

President's Report

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 30th April 2020

It is with pleasure that I present and table my fifth Presidents report to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO), 2020.

Unlike all AGM's before this one, all have been aligned with the annual Australasian Rescue Challenge (ARC) and in the month of July. The AGM has always been staged alongside the ARC for two fundamental reasons; firstly to satisfy our Rules of Association and Incorporation status with the Victorian Consumer Affairs and that is to conduct the AGM within five months of the end of our financial year (with ARRO's financial year finishing on the last day of February each year) and secondly it provides us with an opportunity to attract more financial members to the AGM from attendees to the corresponding ARC.

This year has of course been different to all those that have fallen before us and is the first time in ARRO's twenty four year history that we have had to cancel our ARC. This of course has been a result of the worldwide pandemic which we all know as COVID-19. We were unable to postpone the ARC due to the uncertainty around social distancing rules, public gatherings and the future timeframes surrounding these restrictions. The ARRO Executive in consultation with the ARC20 hosts; Queensland Fire and Emergency Services elected to pick up next year where we stopped this year and conduct ARC21 at the same ARC20 location and again with our ARC20 hosts, QFES. We hope that ARC21 will see a reinvigorated enthusiasm to what we believe is an essential event in the calendar of rescuers across Australasia. ARC21 aims to deliver a high-quality symposium, workshops, extrication/trauma and CPR challenges and of course the social networking opportunity where we can once again assemble and perhaps share our lockdown stories from COVID-19.

My report to the AGM this year will be different from previous reports in that I will not report against our key result areas of our strategic plan but to more so elaborate on some of our success over the last financial year and promote several of our future strategies.

Last year, Fire and Rescue NSW in partnership with NSW SES delivered a top rate ARC in Dubbo that attracted some twenty one teams. We were extremely fortunate to have the NSW Emergency Services Minister, the FRNSW Commissioner and the NSW SES Commissioner open the ARC alongside our Vice President. Their attendance speaks volumes to the benefits they see ARRO and the ARC having within the rescue fraternity.

The ARC was well attended by members of the local community, trade suppliers and rescuers and the symposium, workshops and challenge events certainly delivered on the learning objectives of ARRO.

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Our hosts also delivered an excellent social calendar offering many opportunities for rescuers to get together to form friendships or in many cases, reacquaint themselves with colleagues from past ARC's. Our first and second placed winning teams (FENZ Wanaka VFB and Tasmania Fire Service) both accepted ARRO's offer for financial assistance to represent ARRO and their agencies at the World Rescue Challenge later this year in Miami Dade, USA. However, WRC'20 has been postponed and will now take place in November 2021. Both Wanaka and TFS will be offered to attend WRC21 in lieu of us being able to select teams from what would have been ARC20.

Unfortunately, we saw our long standing partnership with Holden cease due to the closure of their Australian manufacturing arm. Holden had been a long standing friend to ARRO providing up to 75 vehicles per ARC for rescuers to not only work on during the extrication challenges but also newer models to familiarise themselves with the installed technologies and safety features. Holden often provided keynote speakers to address attendees at our symposiums but also donated gifts for us to raffle and/or attract new members during recruitment drives. The relationship with Holden put us at the forefront of our World Rescue Organisation peers allowing our members to access new vehicles for challenge events however as this door closes others will open and we look forward to working closely with other car manufacturers and for the challenges, being able to work closely with the host agencies in securing local and suitable vehicles to fulfil our challenge requirements.

Thanks also goes out to our Gold Sponsors, FRSA/Holmatro and PT Rescue/Lukas as well as our PPE Partners, Pacfire. They are all being impacted by this COVID-19 Pandemic.

Through Dan Ohs our Medical Specialist to the Technical Committee and a Senior St John NZ Officer we have also been able to attract more Ambulance agencies into becoming financial members of ARRO. Standing alongside the Queensland Ambulance Service who was one of our founding members we now have the NSW Ambulance Service, St John NT, St John NZ, Wellington Free Ambulance, Ambulance Tasmania and Ambulance Victoria. With only a few more agencies to join will see ARRO and its membership truly reflect the 'on road' partnerships amongst responders.

Continuing with the medical focus I would also like to acknowledge the work of Dan Ohs, Steve Mann, Gillian Isherwood and others in introducing the CPR challenge into the ARC environment. The CPR challenge was introduced and trialled at ARC19 with the feedback being overwhelmingly positive. The Executive and Technical Committee members agreed to make the CPR challenge a permanent fixture to the ARC. The ARC has now grown from a three-event challenge (immediate, controlled, entrapped) primarily all with an extrication focus to now being a five event fixture with two more events focussing more towards the medical stream of trauma and CPR. All five challenges focus on the actual and evolving role of rescuers where the roles of rescuer and medic are complimentary towards the outcomes and success of the operation.

The Executive, on making the decision to cancel ARC20 also considered the financial impact of COVID-19 on our individual membership, our affiliate, our associate and our agency members and that of our Gold Sponsors and decided to freeze all membership renewals and sponsorship fees to allow everyone to focus on the task they had in front of them. The Executive also acknowledged that in not delivering the ARC that was a major component of the ARRO calendar that seeking renewals was not fundamentally the right thing to do despite ARRO being a 365 day per year operation. The 2020/2021 year will be a different year to past years.

In saying this, I must also say that ARRO is embarking on a 'refresh' exercise. With new agencies coming on board, new committee members, new challenge events, new enthusiasm and a new world emerging it was time to consider re-branding ARRO for the future years and directions. Suggestions

have included renaming of ARRO as the Australasian Rescue Organisation to better reflect our membership and align us more with our parent body, the World Rescue Organisation. I expect proposed changes to come with potential modifications to our branding (letterheads, corporate clothing, PPC, Rules of Association, etc) which may also have an impact on our website and content, strategic planning processes and quite possibly our committee structures. So, despite nothing happening in 2020 on the ARC front there will be considerable action behind the scenes refocussing ARRO into the future. It is proposed that the AGM of 2021 will have our new directions presented to the membership for endorsement.

Closing Comments

I would like to thank all ARRO members for your continued support and interest in developing the art and science of road crash rescue and patient care in Australasia.

Mark Roche AFSM
President