

# OTAGO REGION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

*Jehoon Mun – President*

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

## **OVERVIEW**

2018 has been a year of some really important lessons and realisations that I hope will lead the 2019 Council to greater heights.

The challenges brought year came from internal sources, and external sources out of the Council's control, culminating from general trends that have been occurring within the Region for a number of years.

Admittedly, there were a lot of shortcomings I could have mitigated more as President, but nonetheless I am still really proud and thankful for this year's Council for what has been a roller-coaster of a year.

Josh, Matthew, Aysu, Kate, Mika, Farah, George and Sylvia, thank you for all that you guys have done despite everyone's insane schedules, the experience and expertise you all have imparted in various areas and for your resilience this year!

## **SUMMARY OF KEY EVENTS AND INITIATIVES**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Strategic Planning went well despite a hiccup regarding the accommodation for the Retreat!

It was a great chance for the council to get to know each other a little more as well as having some really good discussions for the upcoming year regarding events, their dates and the goals we would set for ourselves.

My recommendation for next year's council however, would be that having this be a more comprehensive affair with clearer expectations will go a long way for the upcoming year.

### **HIGH SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

This year the High Schools programme faced a number of challenges culminating from circumstances out of the Council's control and a number of trends from previous years. Some of these challenges included the downwards trend in high school engagement and unclear expectations with tertiary volunteers

Despite these challenges, we held our Otago-Southland Model UN in May successfully, big credit and thanks going to Farah and her committee for the big job that went into the organisation of that!

I think reading the reports from the various years of this conference will give next year's Council a really good indicator for where to take things next with the event, as similar challenges led to the unfortunate cancellation of the Otago-Southland Youth Forum, despite the awesome work Josh and his committee did towards the conference. Our Council discussed having this event run early next year with the same content and committee and I still think this is a good plan for the next year to change things up a little bit.

I feel as if George and Josh had some really good ideas and initiatives for the HSA Programme this year, where the main challenge was the capacity to engage with the High Schoolers to expand the programme beyond what we've already achieved with the programme.

## **TERTIARY PROGRAMME**

The Tertiary programme faced many similar challenges as the High Schools Programme this year, coupled with issues surrounding volunteer welfare, engagement and retainment. Though we have foundations set for an awesome programme for Tertiary students, a more rounded approach will help the Tertiary Programme engage with more Tertiary students over the next year.

We had to unfortunately cancel the Interhall Model UN and Case Competition, though we successfully ran a Tertiary Introduction, Tertiary Training and two Speaker Series events.

## **FINANCES**

With the difficulty the Region has had in terms of holding events, the Region has not had a lot of sources of income, but at the same time less chances for the Region to make a deficit - effectively a double edged sword that was unforeseen.

I am still to clean up the Regional Budget with the Treasurer, but once this is done I foresee that the finances of the Otago Region will be in a deficit, though not a large one.

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

We held a few social events throughout the year, including drinks after various events including the Tertiary Introduction done at the end of O-Week.

I feel as if these were really underutilised by the 2018 Council and the potential for them to help the Region in different ways is largely unexplored.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **STARTING EARLIER**

The Otago Regional Council has typically started its work with a Strategic Planning Retreat in February after election.

However, something that became clear as the year progressed was the potential benefit that the Council saw from starting planning in general earlier, mirroring what the other Regional Councils around NZ already do.

Doing this would not only give more time to the Council to do the necessary work to organise great events, but also gives space to move in case things out of the Council's control occur.

Starting with having the Strategic Planning Retreat at the end of this year, and making moves to organise key events before the end of this year too will be great starts

## **VOLUNTEER WELFARE, ENGAGEMENT AND RETAINMENT**

Something that UN Youth Otago has struggled with is filling the void left by the departure of many high-level volunteers over the years. This has led to a skill shortage in some areas leading to the same group of volunteers working on almost all of the different events UN Youth Otago has been working on during the year. This among other reasons has led to unexpected and undesired consequences such as burnout and declining engagement

A rethink into the way the Council interacts with the volunteer base would serve really well for the welfare, engagement and further retainment of volunteers.

I really advise the next Council to observe other OUSA clubs and organisations for ways they have engaged with their club base, and apply appropriate and applicable initiatives with UN Youth Otago's volunteer base (especially similar clubs/organisations like the Red Cross, Debating Society and big clubs like OMSA). Common themes typically include food, a diverse event range, and frequent interactions with the club base at a removed level (in removing that hierarchy between volunteer base and Council)

## **RISK-TAKING AND DIVERGING FROM THE STATUS QUO**

Though there are things we can look to the other Regional Councils for in terms of inspiration and ideas for initiatives and events, it's important to remember that Otago is a Region with a distinctly different demographic and therefore different issues compared with other Regions.

Otago's demographic provides a unique challenge for you guys, a challenge which has admittedly been one the Councils have struggled with since the inception of the Otago Region in 2006.

It's with this sort of mindset I encourage the next council to be bold and unafraid of trying new events, and different ways of interacting with the Region. I have faith that the ideas you implement will lead to a #2019dunnerstunner!