

G'day from Down Under,

2018 seems to have passed before my eyes.

During the year I attended Board Meetings in May (Massachusetts) the House dedication and the Memorial re-dedication, August (PA Convention) and felt truly honoured to represent Region 8. On the home front I logged around 7-8 hours of Red Knights related business per week for a total of approximately 390 hours.

The Convention was a great time, arriving earlier to spend some time with the host Chapter, at the presentation on the Saturday night it was fantastic to see Roger van Kollenburg from our Region accept an OCA (congratulations brother). I did manage a ride out to the Flight 93 memorial a very sober place and reminder of that fateful day in Sep 2001.

Throughout the year Region 8 has continued to grow with us welcoming New Zealand 10 (February 2018) and Australia Chapter 4 being re-issued after a 5-year absence. In the last month at number of Members at Large have come on board from the Hunter Valley Region in New South Wales it is hopeful that a new Chapter can be formed in the near future. Welcome one and all to the family. Region 8 ever changing Membership now stands at 188 NZ and 416 in AUS for a total of 604 over 30 Chapters and Members at Large.

The Region 8 structure is working, QM Sales are doing well with a substantial amount of stock that is sent out in quick fashion, the website is getting a number of hits and growing daily, communications are getting better, postcards have been issued to Chapters for distribution on rides and we are starting to develop more multi chapter events. The International event funding has helped this and was utilized for a number of multi Chapter events.

November saw the First Australian Gathering hosted by Australia 5 modeled on the successful New Zealand event. Friday saw us with a meet and greet, finger food and trivia night, Saturday was a night through some of the beautiful country we get to call home while the weather was very wet, the ride shorten for safety reasons a great time was had by all, Saturday night was our dinner and celebration of everything Red Knight with raising a large sum of money for the hosting Fire Brigade. Sunday was the farewell breakfast; this was the first of a planned annual event that is centered on sharing the camaraderie of fellow firefighters and their families. For more information check out the article in the Newsletter

A little over 3 weeks from writing this I'll be attending the New Zealand Gathering hosted by New Zealand 9 being held in the Hawkes Bay Region. From early signs it should be a very well attended event I'm sure there will be an article in future Newsletters and I will report further again later in 2019.

Especially at this time of year Australia and New Zealand continue to meet the RKIFMC Mission Statement, as a result many individuals and organizations continue to benefit from their work. Many Chapters have taken the lead in organizing Christmas toy runs while others have joined the numerous events being held at this time of the year. Bringing joy to those less fortunate is one of our strengths.

To say I'm proud of each and every one would be an understatement. Many Chapters have become quite the celebrities appearing on National TV and in Newspaper articles. Thank you for raising the profile of our great Club.

I look forward to what next year brings and look forward to continuing to serve you, the membership.

Finally thank you all for your support, from my family to yours we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May 2019 be a great year for us all!

Yours sincerely,

Jason Collins
Loyal to our Duty

