

From the Outgoing President

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent AGM. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as CRU's President for the past three years. I'm grateful for the opportunity to sign-off as President in CRUcial Times by sharing two examples of planning for success and planning for positive change.

The first example is one of collaboration and the value of listening to others when making the big decisions. Every three years the Management Committee and staff work together to develop a Strategic Plan and for our current Strategic Plan we also involved input from the inaugural Stewardship Group. Envisioned as part of the previous Strategic Plan, the Stewardship Group was established for a one-year trial in 2013 with the purpose of bringing together a wider and larger group of leaders from throughout the sector. We asked for their ideas on the following areas: Safeguarding the Vision and thinking of CRU; Contributing to the analysis of sector developments & issues – local, state and federal; and Providing strategic advice and thereby assist CRU to stay relevant and 'in front of the game'.

The Stewardship Group is a good example of the type of planning that is undertaken within CRU. With a small management committee that meets monthly for about 2 hours, it was obvious we did not have the time needed to discuss, analyse and reflect on many of the bigger issues affecting our sector. The majority of our time was focused on issues of governance, financial management and compliance. While time and energy is always devoted to these to ensure CRU remains a viable and sustainable organisation, the establishment of the Stewardship Group was a tangible attempt to achieve the deeper conversation and analysis we were seeking. The plan to establish the group included some key steps such as an Expression of Interest process to identify potential members and a Terms of Reference to guide the group in its discussions. An evaluation process was also part of our planning to review the group in one year. The review process has led to the re-establishment of the Stewardship Group for a two-year period commencing January 2015.

The second example comes from the 2011 International Initiative on Disability Leadership (IIDL) conference. If I feel I am distracted or unfocused, this lesson helps me refocus on the 'why' of my work. One of the key speakers was the then Washington State Director of Developmental Disabilities, Linda Rolfe. Linda was also a contributor to the CRUcial Times edition on Practical Leadership in September 2010. Linda has been a leader of significant change in the area of employment for people with severe disabilities in her state and in both her article and conference presentation, Linda was very clear about the importance of work for everyone. Listening to Linda at the conference, I wrote down one of the key learnings she shared with us about how her department actually planned for and set about dramatically increasing the participation rates of people with severe disabilities in paid work. Linda said:

"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing"

There have been many times when I've been really busy with 'stuff' and I've had to stop and ask myself, "What has this got to do with people with a disability having a good life?" Is this task or deadline really what's important? Am I keeping the main thing, the main thing? Too many times I would say busyness and pressure at work have taken my focus off the main thing. I've since printed and laminated Linda's message and stuck it up in my home office as a constant reminder to not lose focus on what's important and what really needs doing!

Cheers,

Matt Stone