

# Rethinking 2020: We should never forget it

By [DAVID ARMSTRONG](#) | On [4 January 2021](#)

*For millions of people, 2020 was the worst of years. But it also showed humanity at its finest. At times, I find it tempting to want to wish away all memory of 2020. It was a sorrowful, depressing year. Tempting – but wrong.*

It was, tragically, a year of illness, death and suffering; a year of separation, isolation and loneliness; of lost jobs and ruined livelihoods; of stress and mental strain; of drinking and domestic violence; of wariness and weariness; of the devastation of bushland, homesteads and homes.

Turn the card, however, and we see a different year – a time when humanity stepped forward at its finest.

Think of the awe-inspiring work of uncountable numbers of people in protective, helping and healing professions who risked, and sometimes gave, their lives to save others from suffering.

Firefighters as 2020 began; nurses, doctors, hospital and aged-care workers as Covid became the new threat; medical scientists who learned how to treat this baffling, new disease and those who developed vaccines at a previously unknown speed; the health department teams who worked around the clock to track and trace the spread of the disease to help bring it under control.

Think of the day-by-day heroes who worked from home while home-schooling their children; the delivery riders who risked exposure to poor weather, and perhaps to Covid 19, so that we could stay safe at home; those who went to work while governments told us it was too risky for us to do so: bus and train drivers, supermarket and pharmacy staff; garbage and recycling collectors; hospital and health staff; cleaners; cooks; police officers cast into unfamiliar roles.

Most of all think of our families and friends who helped, supported and sustained us, those who reminded us, when we lived in a society that needed reminding, that status, possessions and bank balances are not important in our lives.

Friendship, concern, compassion, kindness, dedication and love made the world go round in 2020.

If we let them do the same in the year just beginning, we can look forward to 2021 with optimism – and even hope that a better society will emerge.

A process that would be encouraged if our political and corporate gatekeepers were to push aside their Meccano-set view of society and listen to the heart that kept our society and, yes, our economy, together and ticking through the worst of the pandemic distress.