

It is my pleasure to present this annual report for Chamber of Commerce Southland, celebrating 142 Years of service to the business community of Southland.

Your board is drawn from a wide range of Southland Businesses, both large and small, to make sure your chamber continues to serve the needs the membership and the boarder business community in Southland. As a member owned and operated organisation independent of national and local government, we have an important advocacy role to play in representing your interests, providing an invaluable link between government and the local business community.

We are also involved in promoting business education and best practice. In the past year we have built a good working relationship with the Otago Southland Employers Association and others to make sure members have access to professional training resources locally.

This year we also undertook a significant new initiative to promote “Trades Qualification” in Southland. With many members advising that they were finding it increasingly difficult to obtain suitably qualified employees, we decided to create an annual night of recognition and celebration for the trades called “TradeQual”. At this event we recognised the achievements of Southlanders who had achieved a recognised trades qualification in the previous 12 months.

The aim is to use this event to continue to raise the profile of trades qualifications in Southland. We were heartened by the support received from all the local councils and local businesses who sponsored the event and I wish to thank all those that contributed. Without your support the event would not have been possible. I would also particularly like to thank Dave McKissock who organised the event on behalf of the committee, you were an inspiration, thank you.

The significant theme I took from the TradeQual event was that it was great to celebrate success, something we need to do more often as a business community. Hopefully we will see all of you at this years event.

Your Chamber is also very fortunate to have the continued dedication of the Eastern Southland committee who work tirelessly in the interests of the members in Eastern Southland. The committee continued to work on a number of new initiatives to help promote local businesses, and also completed the security camera project for the Gore CBD. Thank you to Nick Jeffrey and the team for their inspiring dedication to promoting business in their area.

On a sadder note, I would like to recognise the contribution of Ernest New who passed away last year. Ernest was a long serving member of your board and executive committee, and made an invaluable contribution the Chamber and the Southland business community. Ernest was well respected by all those who worked with him and will be missed.

I thank my fellow directors for their ongoing voluntary commitment to your Chamber, without your support the Chamber could not continue to represent Southland Business and Southland would be all the poorer for it. Also thank you to for the support and ongoing dedication of Richard Hay, our Executive Officer, and his team, it has been a rewarding year working with you and I’m looking forward to the coming year with confidence and will continue to provide real benefits to our members.

I wish all members a prosperous year, and thank you for your ongoing support of Chamber of Commerce Southland.

Andrew Leys
President. 2005