

Eastern Southland Executive Committee Chairman's AGM Report 2007

It is with pleasure that I present my first Chairman's report for the Eastern Southland Committee of the Chamber of Commerce Southland.

It has been another busy year for everyone in business. We have again seen more demands and compliance costs forced onto businesses but with a number of positive initiatives being undertaken in Eastern Southland, and the wider Southland district, we can look forward positively at a time when other parts of the country start to feel the effects of a slow down.

To me this reinforces the need for a strong Chamber. Business owners are tied down running their operations and need a voice for their concerns, someone to run courses and somewhere to discuss ideas. We are fortunate to have a dedicated committee but equally as important we have wonderful support from you our members for which I thank you.

We are continually trying to improve the way we do things to ensure they meet our member's needs. We have introduced a profile ad for new members with the support of the Ensign and ASB. We are looking to revamp the BA5 concept to be called "Behind the Scenes" and continue to look for interesting places to visit. Please support these, as they are a tremendous opportunity to learn about local businesses and to network. Knowledge of what is happening in Southland can lead to growth in your own business.

I just want to highlight two events from this year.

- Meet the Candidates evening
- Customer service awards

The new formats were a great success and a credit to those involved and highlights the talented people we have to run these events.

To our Executive Office Richard Hay and his team a big thank you for all your support.

To all my committee members a big thank you again for giving up your time and all your support when things needed to be done.

Unfortunately special thanks must go to Ewen Whitefield, Melissa King, Justin Abernathy and Tony Shallard who are retiring.

Ewen was a founding member in 1999 and served as chairman from 2000 till 2002. Melissa joined in 2004 and has been the driving force behind our events committee. Justin and Tony joined in 2005 with Justin using her talents on the events committee and Tony helping the boys on the membership committee.

Your knowledge, work and humour around the meeting table will be missed but rest assured I have your phone numbers.

Lastly a special thanks to our secretary Helen Van Der Linden who is also leaving. Helen was thrown in the deep end and has done a tremendous job both for the Chamber and keeping me on task and in the right place at the right time. We wish her all the best with her new/old job.

On a positive note I would like to thank all the new committee members for standing and look forward to working with you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Renne Sayer who is taking over from Helen as our Chamber Secretary. Please make yourself known to her and I'm sure you will be hearing from her during the year.

And remember - It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

John Wilson
Eastern Southland Chairman
Southland Chamber of Commerce
April 2008