

COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT

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Earlier this week I visited Dunedin and met with their Mayor, CEO, Councillors and staff. I discussed Dunedin's dog control system and was impressed. I'll be sending Bill Watt to Dunedin to check out the costs and administrative details. Basically Dunedin believes in birth control rather than Invercargill's catch and impound system.

The highlight of the visit was a site inspection of the Otago Stadium. It is a huge project and my advice to Southlanders visiting Dunedin is to drive down beside the Leith River and park in Minerva Street. You will be only 20 metres from one of the biggest building projects taking place in the South Island. Most of the super sized pre-cast concrete beams used for the seating were made in Invercargill. Great!

We are proud of our Velodrome which seats 1,000 people around a cycling track. Now try to imagine 30,000 people around a rugby field. It is a massive project that I've always believed will benefit Southland because it will attract thousands of visitors to our region. Financially it will make or break Dunedin and you have to admire their courage. The Council was divided 7 votes to 5 votes over whether the project should go ahead, but now that construction has begun, they are all united in trying to make it work.

Most big projects trigger early opposition but once they are built there is widespread support. That's why I'm so nervous about Rodney Hide's fetish over referendums. It means in effect that no major project will ever get started.