

## **COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT**

### **SOUTHLAND EXPRESS, 20 AUGUST 2009**

TVNZ's new programme 'South' starring Marcus Lush shows how much interest there is in Southland. The programme was a huge hit, gaining a greater audience than even the Six O'Clock News. This is a reflection of the unprecedented interest there is in our region. As they say in show biz - when you're hot you're hot, and when you're not, you're not. It also shows the popularity of Bluff based Marcus Lush who has been involved in some highly successful programmes such as the series on New Zealand trains, 'Off the Rails'.

Another popular series was 'Million Dollar Catch' that followed the lives of several Bluff fishermen. The beauty of our region and the characters that live here are certainly becoming identified as the spirit of New Zealand. We represent the rugged, independent Kiwi pioneer that so many big city dwellers aspire to be.

Yesterday I had retired farmer, Mr W R Foster, come to my office. He said he was 81 and therefore wanted a parking exemption sticker. There was only one problem. He lives in Winton and the exemption is only available for those who live in Invercargill. As far as I'm concerned we should encourage anyone in Southland who wants to shop in Invercargill and still manages to gain their driver's licence beyond the age of 80. There can't be many in that category and it could be seen as an example of shared services.

I would also like to see a universal system for issuing building permits. Instead of having 70 different Councils all with different systems and different forms, why can't the process be exactly the same regardless of whether you live in Invercargill or Central Otago? In the age of Rodney, anything is possible.