

# **COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT**

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## **THE HOTSEAT**

There is little on this Earth more horrific than being first to arrive at a car crash, but Kiwis are generally practical and do the best they can to help those who are injured. In last weekend's accident there was abundant publicity about Gary McCormick and myself, but no praise was given to the dozen others who stopped to help. Some set up vitally important road blocks to stop other cars ploughing into the carnage. Others comforted those who were injured but were not trapped. Of course it was tragic for the young people who were injured, but at least they are alive and I was inspired by the way everyone tried to be helpful.

The accident probably helped save Richard Worth MP from a lot more criticism. I believe that his biggest mistake was when he stood up in Parliament to proclaim that he only had "cloudy recollections of the trip to India" and instead he announced he had a "cloudy erection". If you want to focus national attention on a rather embarrassing situation, then speaking in Parliament about the male anatomy is a guaranteed winner.

In his defence I accept that there could have been the public perception that Dr Richard Worth had a vested interest in setting up an international aviation college in Invercargill, but at least he was trying to do something positive. It's the Ministers that never make mistakes because they never actually try to do anything or never make a firm stand on anything that drive me batty. Sitting on your hands and keeping your seat warm is always the safest course of action in politics, but personally I despise the 'play it safe – do nothing' brigade far more than those who make mistakes while trying to do something positive for the country.

Invercargill could be the centre of major bio-tech developments with our Auckland Island pigs. It will bring more money into our province than oil and coal combined. We were promised that this Government would slash red tape and encourage innovation! While I support John Key's cycling track, I believe there are far greater opportunities if we can add value to our agricultural base. While meat and wool will always be important, I believe that high-tech by-products from the fringes of agriculture could be important.

Local government is not only working on the coalface of economic development, but there's been hot debate over a whole range of controversial issues. The forced amalgamation of Auckland is causing a huge uproar. Is New Zealand giving birth to its first super city or will it become our first super nightmare?

Then there's the lone ranger, Michael Laws, who resigned from Local Government New Zealand and now wants our support to keep the 'h' out of Wanganui. I'm not sure what he wants us to do. Maybe we should add an 'h' to Invercargill in sympathy for his situation? 'Hinvercargill' could be the name of the South's new super city as it could represent both Invercargill and the hinterland.

Maybe not. Let's just hang Mayor Michael out to dry when he rides out to do battle with the Geographic Society.

