

COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT

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What a roasting Bill English has faced over his accommodation allowance. The media feeding frenzy explains why the polls all agree that politicians belong to the most loathed and despised profession in New Zealand.

Talkback radio and letters to the editor accuse our political leaders of nest feathering as they greedily shove their snouts in the public trough. While that sanctimonious 'cardigan on legs' Peter Dunne looks smugly on because he has no accommodation allowance, Bill was put to the sword.

I don't often agree with our Deputy Prime Minister in political terms, but I believe Bill English is an honest, hard working, committed, political leader. If he had put his life's work into being a successful sheep farmer, he could have purchased a freehold house in Wellington by now. I find it just as repugnant to attack solo Mums and publicly accuse them of being selfish opportunists and worse. Single parents are some of the bravest and most compassionate people I have met.

I also have no intention of criticising businessmen who get into financial strife because of the recession. Ross Wensley and his wife, Raewyn, are two of the warmest, generous and most decent human beings I've had the pleasure of meeting. An essential element of life in our capitalist society is the courage of the entrepreneur. They take huge risks but without them our society would be static, sterile, downright boring.

When times get tough, instead of attacking each other we should extend support to those who are struggling.