



Issue 7, February 2010

## WELCOME BACK

I trust you are all relaxed and energised after the holiday break. 2010 will be a busy one for the Government and I'm really looking forward to it.



Me with Hon John Key and Southern MPs Eric Roy, Jacqui Dean and Hon Bill English at the Party's Southern Regional Christmas luncheon

## PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

The Prime Minister opened this year's Parliament with his statement outlining the Government's priorities for 2010.

The Government is focused on a number of issues including improving education and skills for young people, making communities safer by addressing the drivers of crime and providing better and faster healthcare and social services for New Zealanders.

The Prime Minister also outlined the Government's focus on growing the economy through boosting infrastructure, reforming regulations, encouraging innovation and tax reform.

More details will be revealed in the Budget on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The Government is considering an increase in G.S.T. and the Prime Minister has committed that any rise will have commensurate adjustments to tax and benefit levels to ensure spending power is maintained.

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

Ensuring our children deserve the best possible start in life is one of the Government's priorities. One way we are doing this is through National Standards.

National Standards were introduced at the start of term one and will be rolled out over the year for Year 1 to 8 students. The Standards are going to help student achievement and help the one in five children who currently leave school without adequate reading and writing skills.

There has been some confusion over National Standards and I am pleased to be holding a public meeting to which the Minister of Education Hon Anne Tolley will attend. This is a chance for parents to come and listen to the Minister on her goals for National Standards and also have the opportunity to ask questions.

I encourage you to let anyone that may be interested in attending know of the details:

### NATIONAL STANDARDS MEETING

**DATE:** Monday 29 March  
**TIME:** 7.30pm  
**PLACE:** Port Otago Lounge,  
Edgar Centre  
116 Portsmouth Drive  
Dunedin

If you would like to attend please RSVP to [blueandgold@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:blueandgold@parliament.govt.nz)

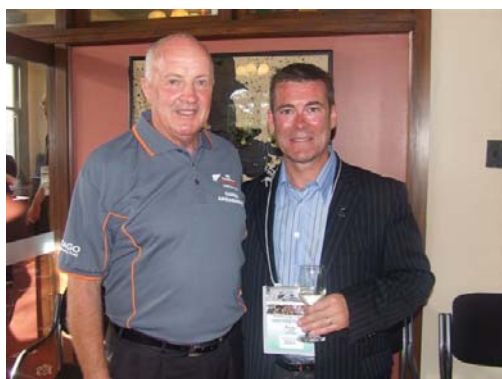
I look forward to seeing you there.

## MASTERS GAMES

Earlier this month Dunedin hosted the 2010 New Zealand Masters Games.

I was fortunate enough to go along to some of the events and see what a tremendous success the Games were. Congratulations to the organisers, volunteers and especially to all competitors who I hope were not too sore following their exertions.

On a personal note, the highlight of my weekend was getting to meet a boyhood hero and Commonwealth Games gold medalist Dick Taylor who is one of the Games Ambassadors.



With Dick Taylor

## HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Having come from a strong health background, I am always keen to see development in the sector to ensure Dunedin has the best healthcare facilities.

That is why I recently had a meeting with Health Minister Hon Tony Ryall to ask for capital funding to be made available for Dunedin Hospital's paediatric inpatient capital development project.

The Minister was very receptive and I am optimistic about funding being made available. I will continue to work towards making sure the funding is made available for this important project.

In other health news, I was pleased to hear that the Minister of Health approved the decision of the Otago and Southland District Health Boards to merge. The new Southern DHB will consist of four representatives from Otago, three from Southland and three Government appointees.

The merger will enhance services and operations across the two regions and help reduce administrative costs.

## DCC DIGITAL STRATEGY

I recently met with members of the DCC Digital Strategy project team. The team is charged with providing a long-term vision for Dunedin and its digital communications. The strategy will address more than just broadband or fibre in the ground, covering components such as relevant content, capability and confidence. If you have an interest in how the city plans to position itself for a digital future I encourage you to participate at:

<http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/business-development/digital-strategy/digital-strategy-consultation-questionnaires>

## FRIDAY CLINICS

I have restarted my Friday clinics in Waikouaiti and also at the University.

Upcoming clinics at **Waikouaiti** are on:  
19 March and 23 April  
10am – 12pm  
East Otago Events Centre

**University of Otago** clinics are on:  
26 March and 30 April  
10 – 11am  
Clubs and Societies Building

If you or anyone you know would like to come and discuss anything with me at the clinics, please contact my office for an appointment.

## CONTACT DETAILS

### Dunedin Office:

Assistants: Cindi Ewart & Sue O'Connell

Upstart House  
333 Princes Street  
PO Box 807, Dunedin 9054

Phone: 03 477 7330

Fax: 03 477 4885

Email: [blueandgold@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:blueandgold@parliament.govt.nz)

Website: [www.michaelwoodhouse.co.nz](http://www.michaelwoodhouse.co.nz)