

Mirror 26th April 2013

Raise your hand!

If you've every thought you'd like to have a go at local government, now is the time to raise your hand. Elections are in October, and the most successful candidates are usually those who identify early. Now is good.

I don't see any competition emerging for the current lot, and that's a real worry. A council that works well, and that works in your interests, needs new blood, new ideas, a bit of nervous looking-over-the-shoulder energy and the occasional boot up the backside. Right across Central Otago none of that has happened for a long time.

Does it matter? You'd expect me to say 'of course the council matters'. I was there on and off for 21 years. It may not be all over the front pages, but decisions made by your council affect how you live your life. We hand our elected representatives a lot of responsibility, and expect them to make good decisions on our behalf. Mostly they do, but we shouldn't let them get too complaisant.

We recently had a chance to change things, through the representation review process, but the present council – comfortable and conservative – managed to convince itself, and the local government commission, that the status quo is as good as it gets.

Do you think so?

Malcolm Macpherson
212 words