

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: 16 OCTOBER 2011

Keep your eye on the ball.

The city is alive with energy and life as the rugby world cup approaches the last games. This weekend the semi-finals and then the final! Everyone is talking about it. Some are caught up in following games and teams closely and predicting who would be best to win this weekend so the All Blacks have a winning chance. Some business operators I have been speaking to are wondering when the bonanza that was predicted for them will happen, and noting that income is down on regular turnover. If there is one thing that comes clearly through the games – and I *have* watched a number – it is that you have to keep your eye on the ball and be able to predict where your team members will be and to be able to rely on them to be there when you need them. With all the excitement focussed on the ‘biggest game in town’, it is hard to keep in mind that there is an ever bigger game looming – the general election in November! I can’t help thinking that as a nation we are losing sight of the ‘ball’ in that game and getting wooed into complacency by the feel good factor of warmer weather, smiling politicians, ‘she’ll be right’ bonhomie, and fatuous reports that seem to say we should be thankful we have weathered the recession so well and been so little affected by it. I think it is time to examine the game plan... to become aware of where the team you will vote for will be on the field in relation to really important issues like child poverty and abuse, carbon emissions, closing the wealth/poverty gap, availability of fresh produce, benefits, and protection of state assets. I am asking myself if I will be able to rely on the team I favour to offer something to celebrate in relation to these things. I want to be proud to be a winner in the international arena for the way we care for our children and elderly, feed healthy food to the majority of our people, take practical steps to avoid exacerbating climate change, and enhance democracy in our nation. It means we can’t risk taking our eyes off the ball at this crucial time in the game, or being distracted by skirmishes and fancy polls and advertising on the side-lines.

Susan