

# Passion for golf drives third degree

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By [John Gibb](#) on Mon, 24 Aug 2009

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Dunedin city councillor Fliss Butcher is keen to see Dunedin realise its potential as a leading centre for golf tourism.

Cr Butcher (51), who already has two earlier University of Otago degrees, a BA in education and a BCom in management, graduated from the university again at the weekend with a master of entrepreneurship degree.

Cr Butcher, who is an enthusiastic social golfer, said there was big growth potential in Dunedin sports tourism and for involving visitors who wanted to take an active part in sport, not just to watch others performing.

"I'd like Dunedin to become a golfing destination," she said.

Dunedin had a series of attractive, high quality and somewhat under-used golf courses, with support available from several resident golf professionals.

In particular, there was scope to attract New Zealand and overseas tourists who had not played golf before to learn more about the game in a safe and fun environment, she said.

Her approach was that of what she termed an "ecopreneur" - an entrepreneur keen to develop a business which was environmentally sustainable.

She was impressed with the work being done at the university's Centre for Entrepreneurship and had now set up Play-A-Round Ltd, a golf tourism company to encourage more people to head to the city to play a few holes of golf.

The centre was established several years ago when the Dunedin City Council provided a million dollars - matched by the Government - to set up a university professorial chair in entrepreneurship.

Its aim was to foster the growth of new businesses and associated jobs to boost the city economy.

Cr Butcher said she had wanted to find out more about the entrepreneurship scheme and had been keen to develop her own golf tourism company, while continuing her work as a city councillor.

The degree is based on a 15-month course designed to support "those with an entrepreneurial spirit who want to start an innovative new venture", university officials say.

Many of the papers are taught in intensive three-day-long modules, enabling participants to continue full-time work.

Cr Butcher was "very proud" of completing her entrepreneurship degree.

Her studies had been "very stressful at times", and she also had to develop new skills, including in rigorous financial analysis.

She had received support from husband Ian Butcher, entrepreneurship centre director Prof Brendan Gray, and from several business mentors, including Dunedin golf professional Shelley Duncan.

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Dunedin City Councillor and University of Otago graduate Fliss Butcher is pursuing her interest in sustainable entrepreneurship, and in golf tourism. Photo by Peter McIntosh.

