



Cath's coffee is a franchise winner

By **LUKE O'DONNELL**

Southbridge mother Cath Illingworth may be hidden in Selwyn's deep south, but she covers a fair few miles and is even making waves in Australia.

As one of more than a hundred Xpresso Delight franchise-holders throughout New Zealand and Australia, Mrs Illingworth's topping of the region's pool of franchisees was all in a day's work.

Quite literally, a day's work in fact. Mrs Illingworth spent 2009 racing about the city meeting clients' demands for more product, and several more hours a week on admin from the confines of her own home.

This year she re-jigged her schedule so Monday was her busy day, but much of her week is saved for time with children. Given recent success, she gauged she would likely go part-time into Tuesdays as well, but for the time being, this particular job is one of her finest career moves to date.

Mrs Illingworth has owned her franchise for 16 months and said the award came out of the blue.

"I received a phone call from Xpresso in January and they told me I was the overall winner. I was so shocked, I couldn't believe it!

"I upped my game to target the New Zealand prize, but I thought with Australia's cities and high-rise set up over there I would struggle to compete."

Hardly claiming a coffee pedigree (a mother with an IT and media background), her acquisition of the franchise came about purely from the hours it offered.

"It was about personal satisfaction, and my lifelong fancy to be my own boss. I wandered into the accountant's office and told him I wanted to work my own hours and own days and meet lots of people. He rolled his eyes to heaven and shook his head.

"I saw the Xpresso Delight opportunity advertised, I knew

people were quite passionate about coffee, and it seemed like a very do-able idea. So I took those numbers into the accountant, and waited for the eyes to go again. And they never did.

"He pretty much told me it was a great idea."

Stephen Spitz and Paul Crabtree created Xpresso Delight 2004, and involves fully-automated, commercial-grade, gourmet espresso coffee machines in workplaces free of charge. Coffee costs \$1 a cup.

Mrs Illingworth has four larger corporate machines and nine smaller pods throughout Christchurch. Her business exploded almost 500 per cent in the first 12 months.

"Catherine joined us when the economy was in decline and business-cost concerns soared. Despite this, she's managed to record amazing growth while leaving a fantastic impression on all of her customers.

"It's a real achievement," Mr Spitz said.



Bean queen: Coffee franchisee Cath Illingworth topped Australasian sales records 16 months into the job, not bad for the Southbridge mum running the bulk of her business one day a week.