

# Over-50s delighted with national award



**Keeping busy:** Exercises underway at the award-winning over-50s Active in Aging programme held weekly at TSB Stadium. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By **LYN HUMPHREYS**  
midweek@dailynews.co.nz

Every Tuesday up to 120 of New Plymouth's senior citizens head to TSB Stadium for a two-hour workout, games, a cuppa and a chat.

The popular Active in Aging over-50s group has been running for 21 years.

"I think what they do is amazing. It gets lots of people active that wouldn't normally be," their aerobics instructor, Hilary Blackstock, said after nine years on the job.

She is so impressed she nominated them for the Community Excellence Award at the New Zealand Fitness Awards.

And they won. Blackstock travelled to Auck-

land last Saturday to collect the award and presented it to the unsuspecting but delighted class yesterday. Blackstock also nominated the group last year when they made the finals and did so again this year believing they deserved to take out the top prize. The judges agreed.

Active in Aging chairwoman Gloria Dravitski, who was one of the unsuspecting when spoken to by *Midweek* last week, said between 100 and 120 turned up each week for the two hours of activities. They could do as much or as little as they wished.

For \$3 the wide variety of activities include yoga, line dancing or bowls. When the stadium is booked for conferences or the like, it is held next door at Pukekura Raceway. From 10am till 10.30am

participants can do general exercises. There is a break for morning tea which is followed by stretching and flexing, where people can either sit or lie down, or choose to walk or march. At 11.15am they can choose bowls, tai chi or line dancing.

"For a lot it's the social contact that is important," she says.

"All the committee – there are eight of us – are volunteers. That way we keep the cost down and can use the money to pay for the instructors, venue and morning tea," Dravitski said.

The group attended the International Day of the Older Person celebrations at the district council's civic centre on October 1. About 20 groups were presented with a plaque to acknowledge their work for older people.