



**PASSION FOR NETBALL:** Maree Bernasconi has been awarded life membership to Netball Counties Manukau.

# Dedication rewarded

By MITCH HYDE

The queen bee of Pukekohe Netball Centre has been awarded the greatest honour by Counties Manukau Netball.

Life membership was presented to Maree Bernasconi at the conclusion of Netball Counties Manukau's annual meeting on March 28 and she admitted she was hoping to receive the rare honour.

"I knew that I had come to the end of my final term as a board member and this is a way for me to remain a part of Netball Counties Manukau," Bernasconi said.

In the 30 years that Bernasconi has been associated with Pukekohe Netball Centre she has been the president, helped to upgrade the current netball pavilion debt free and been the principal contact for the Comet franchise.

"I have been involved with Counties Manukau Netball for the past 20 years and started out as their coaching coordinator and delegate to meetings."

Bernasconi was on the working party to establish the netball association when both Counties and Manukau Netball Associations joined,

going on to become a board member. "I was also on the working party starting up the Northern Mystics," she said.

One of the most enjoyable parts of working within the netball community for Bernasconi was the option to travel with the Counties Manukau New Zealand Championship team.

If you were worried about not seeing Bernasconi down at the courts on a Saturday morning be reassured that she has no plans to stop any time soon.

"I love watching the girls play through the years and get a huge kick out of

watching Camilla Lees play for New Zealand after watching her come up through Pukekohe Netball," she said.

Bernasconi is also developing the next generation of netball stars with her 20-month-old granddaughter Jorja Entwistle. "I just bought her a netball hoop the other day and have got her playing already," she said. Her 11-year-old granddaughter Hannah plays netball for St Joseph's Primary School.

- See Maree Bernasconi talk about her life membership award on the *Franklin County News* Facebook page.