

Stick with the day job Len, netballers say

By **KAREN MANGNALL**

Memo from Manurewa's young netballers to mayor Len Brown: Stick with the day job.

His half-dozen attempts to net the winter season's opening goal drew gales of laughter from the crowd packing the Netball Manurewa Centre on Saturday.

Players, parents and officials were joined by Mr Brown, councillors, local board members and MPs to celebrate the opening of stage one of the centre's multimillion dollar upgrade.

President Lillian Cattell says they're "a long way from finishing".

The lean-to entry and admin area have been demolished in the \$1.4 million initial revamp. There's a new toilet and shower block, cafe, kitchen and control room, office and storage space, and security gates and fences.

Ms Cattell says the next steps are to extend the indoor court to regulation length and upgrade the outdoor courts and public toilets.

"We need help for the projects we need to undertake," she said, glancing meaningfully at the mayor and Maori Party co-leader Pita Sharples.

"You've seen the dumb budget that we've got at the

moment," Mr Sharples replied, quickly tipping the funding pass to Mr Brown.

"You know the government's got no money but maybe the new council?"

Mr Brown says the revamped netball centre is one of "three fantastic facilities" to open in Manurewa, after the Mountfort Park multisport complex and the upgraded rugby clubrooms.

They're all tributes to the hard work of former Manukau city councillors, board members, sports leaders and sponsors like the Wiri Licensing Trust.

"I'm proud the council

invested so strongly in this club to give it a much-needed makeover."

The new Auckland Council has more work to do on "lifting Manurewa as a whole", especially the town centre, Randwick Park, RataVine and Wiri central, Mr Brown says.

The Manurewa Local Board is asking the council for \$1.5m towards finishing the netball centre upgrade and is hoping for a "yes" in this year's budget, board chairman Daniel Newman says.

"Rewa deserves as good an infrastructure as anywhere else in Auckland."

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