

Small club sweeps scrabble board

Seven-member
Whangārei team
take top honours

Lindy Laird

Yowza! The small Whangārei Scrabble Club did really well on the tiles when a seven-member team won Best Performing Club at the 40th National Scrabble Tournament in Wellington.

Club president June Dowling said everyone in the all-women team excelled at the event on June 1.

"To have seven players achieving these results from our small club of 18 reflects well for Whangārei. I am so proud of them," she said.

Not only was the team one of the smallest at the tournament, and the members had to travel the farthest, the club itself is very small, she said.

There were six grades at the



national tournament with 12 to 14 contestants in each. Players came from all over the country.

The New Zealand clubs use the International Scrabble Dictionary, play against the clock with 25-minute

games and play doubles. The lexicon available to use in the game of words changes with the times.

Dowling said a new Scrabble dictionary was being printed and would be available to buy this month.

She has a list of some of the new words but not their meaning.

"New two-letter words include 'ze', 'ok' and 'ew'.

"There's also 'yowza', which will be fabulous for scoring and 'qapik' which

can have an 's' added on the end." (A qapik is a monetary unit of Azerbaijan and yowza is roughly equivalent to 'gosh'.)

Nearly 3000 words have been added, incorporating slang, gender identity and politics.

The Whangārei members' individual results at the national competition were: Cicely Bruce, 7th in Grade B; Margie Hurley, 1st in Grade C; Jena Yousef, 3rd Grade E; Jenny Lichfield, 5th in Grade E; Suzanne Liddall, 3rd in Grade F; Sue Harding, 4th in Grade F; Anne Scatchard, 5th in Grade F.

The highest individual score went to Jenny Lichfield and playing partner in Grade E and the highest aggregate score to Margie Hurley and her playing partner in Grade C.

The Whangārei club will hold a tournament on July 5-6, with players coming from all over New Zealand.

The club – which has only one male member, whom Dowling describes as an "up-and-coming champion" – plays at the Bridge Club in North St on Thursdays at 1pm.

Winning word makers Suzanne Harding (left), Margie Hurley, Jenny Lotchfield, Anne Scatchard, Suzanne Liddall and Cicely Bruce (grand master). Absent: Jena Yousef.

Photo / Michael Cunningham