

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ROTORUA

REPORT ON NATIONAL SUMMER GAMES CHRISTCHURCH 2025



The 2025 National Summer Games were held in Christchurch from 10th December to 14th December 2025, with over 1,200 athletes and hundreds more volunteers, coaches and support staff. Our Rotorua team consisted of 39 athletes and 17 volunteers, competing in five sports, Bocce, Football, Indoor Bowls, Swimming and Ten Pin Bowling. We travelled in two groups, with a large group travelling by local bus company, Town & Country Touring, to Tauranga to fly from there to Christchurch and a smaller group flying from Rotorua. We chose to arrive a day earlier due to flight times and all arrived into Christchurch airport at the same time. We were one of the first teams to arrive and were welcomed by so many support staff who ensured we got on the bus to our accommodation safely. Some of our team were interviewed by media and you may have seen us on TV. All the attention made it extra exciting for the athletes.

Team leaving from Tauranga



Team leaving from Rotorua

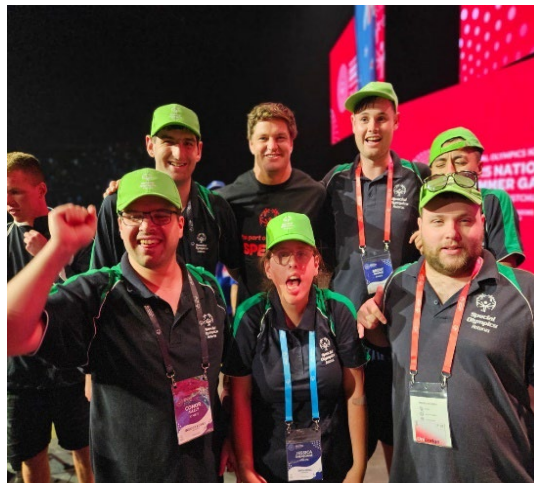




Accommodation

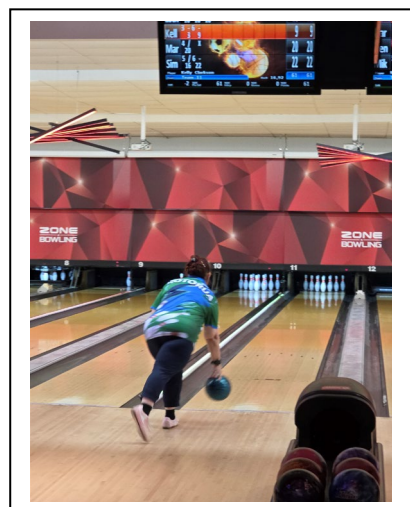
Accommodation was at Canterbury University Tupuanuku site in Ilam. On arrival everyone was shown to their rooms. All had their own room with some ensuites, and we got to look around the facility. We were all on one floor with kitchen facilities, shared bathrooms and lounge areas. Catering was on ground floor and everyone was well fed all week, with athletes appreciating access to the hot chocolate machine. There was also a games room, quiet spaces and a much-needed laundry room. Transport to the sports facilities, ceremonies and other programmes was direct from the University and worked very well.

Opening Ceremony



The Opening Ceremony was held on Wednesday afternoon at Wolfbrook Arena. Rotorua had the honour of having one of our athletes, Madison Edwards picked from 1,200 athletes to give the Special Olympics Oath “*Let me win, but if I can not win let me be brave in the attempt*” to open the ceremony. We also had athletes Gregg Hyde and Delarnie Smith, with volunteer Maxine Smith represent Rotorua on stage. The MC, Jason Gunn had the audience in stitches and Scott Barrett was the star with some of our athletes who got to meet him. It was a long ceremony and by the time athletes got back to the accommodation and had dinner they were in bed for an early start to the competition the next day.

SPORTS



Ten-Pin Bowling

Our ten-pin team consisted of sixteen bowlers – Matthew Gibbs, Kris Roguski, Caseylee Raston, Nadia Ngeru, Esther Miller, Kelly Clarkson, Marcel Kessels, Simon Gillies, Allan Carroll, Amelia Reeve, Maureen McLeod, Gregg Hyde, Corvette Welsh, Delarnie Smith, Lionel Boielle and Shannon Cooper. Our Rotorua ten pin bowlers performed extremely well at our recent National Summer games in Christchurch. Every member played in a pair and then a team of four playing a total of 6 games. They competed over a variety of divisions based on their average score for the year which was updated in October. Their average put them into divisions but at the games they were placed solely on their pinfall. They competed against 242 bowlers. The competition ran very smoothly for the first time in NSG’s history.



Kris Roguski was our outstanding bowler of the tournament, getting 2 of his highest ever scores. In the pair competition he scored 183 in one game with 3 strikes in a row. Then to top it off in the team's event he scored 200 with 4 strikes in a row. (This was the highest score at the whole tournament so an outstanding achievement). The athletes played with enthusiasm, showing great sportsmanship to their own players and the other teams they were playing against 'hi fiving' every strike and spare scored. This is the true beauty of Special Olympics and as the coach I was extremely proud of all their performances.

Our results are below.

Team event

Division 2 - Matthew, Kris, Caseylee and Nadia 2 nd	Division 6 - Esther, Kelly, Marcel and Simon 6 th
Division 7 - Allan, Amelia, Maureen and Gregg 8 th	Division 9 - Corvette, Delarnie, Lionel and Shannon 4 th

Doubles Event

Division 3 - Nadia and Casey Lee 1 st	Division 4 - Matthew and Kris 1 st
Division 6 - Simon and Marcel 3 rd	Division 13 - Amelia and Gregg 3 rd
Division 13 - Esther and Kelly 4 th	Division 13 - Allan and Maureen 5 th
Division 15 - Shannon and Lionel 3 rd	Division 18 - Delarnie and Corvette 4 th

The doubles teams of Nadia and Casey Lee, Matthew and Kris had the 3rd and 4th highest scores out of all the doubles teams



Bocce

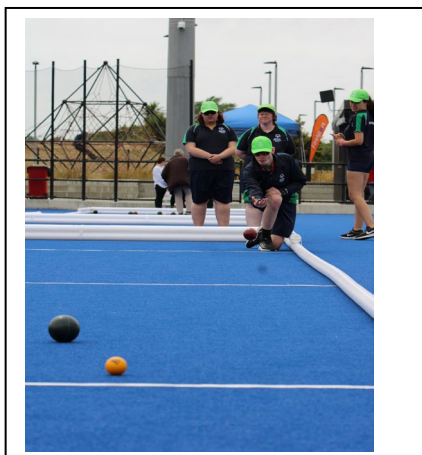
The Bocce team had a great experience at the National Summer games in Christchurch. The team members were Anthea Glasgow, Paige Sullivan-Hona, Tyrone Banfield, Emilija Berry. The venue, Nga Puna Wai Sports Hub, was fantastic. The surface we played on was excellent and being blue made it easier for vision. The program was well organized. Carol and Steve were very thorough and communicated well with us. They were very supportive and friendly with the athletes. It all made for a very relaxed, but professional atmosphere.

The first day was for Divisioning. This put us in Division 3 for Team games. In the pairs Division 3 for Paige and Tyrone. Pairs in Division 7 for Emilija and Anthea.

In the Team games, the team won a gold medal in Division 3. They were overjoyed and deserved it; they won all their games but one-4 out of 5 games!

In the Pairs Tyrone and Paige won 3 games and lost one, receiving a silver medal (Division 3) and Emilija and Anthea lost their 4 games in Division 7 and came 4th (a ribbon).

It was a very enjoyable time for athletes and coaches. We look forward to the next NSG





Football

After not competing at last games in Hamilton, we had a very keen group of footballers looking forward to competing and catching up with other teams.

After a win and a loss in the grading games we competed in division 2. Looking to better the bronze medals received in Wellington in 2017, it was great to see the level of improvement in the team and some slick team play saw the team win all 4 games and take home the gold medal.



The Football team members were Brent George, Bodie Stanley-Hardiman, Zane Karaka, Christopher Thomas, Rahul Khatri, Christopher Taylor, Heremaia Hohaia, Jordan Dittmer, Leo Coleman-Price, Lachlan Dawson, Keyarn Pulford.

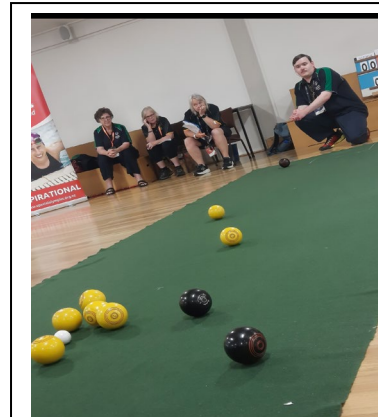
Indoor Bowls



Indoor Bowls was featured once again at the NSG. This was the third time we sent an Indoor Bowls team. The team were Troy Stampa, William Hawker, Madison Edwards and Conor Allely with coach Nicholas Van den Broek and volunteer Tegan Stampa.

After divisioning on Day 1 our Rotorua pairs teams were put into Division 1 (Troy and William) and Division 3 (Conor and Madison) respectively. Rotorua achieved both 2nd and 4th in the pairs. For the fours Rotorua was seeded in Division 1 finishing second.

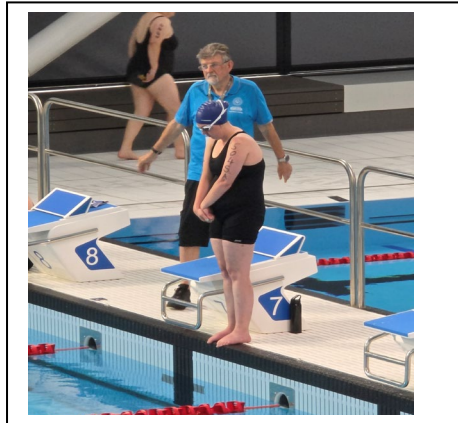
There were double the number of indoor bowls teams at this NSG's compared to Hamilton in 2022 so they did exceptionally well.





Swimming

We fielded a team of 4 swimmers, Bailey Dunbar, Tui Martin, Jessica Sherborne and Krystal McLeod, for the games held at the brand new Parakiore complex and they did themselves proud. Swimmers are ranked in divisions based on their times entered and ability to ensure they are competing with swimmers with similar ability. Bailey Dunbar won an excellent silver with a personal best in the 50m Breaststroke. Swimming in some fast swim finals Bailey acquitted herself very well in the 25m Breaststroke and 25m Freestyle events. Tui Martin also swam a personal best to win gold in the 50m Freestyle swam fast and hard in her 25m Backstroke and 25m Freestyle finals. Krystal McLeod had a standout summer games taking bronze medals in her 25m Backstroke and 25m Freestyle and silver in the 50m Freestyle. Jessica Sherborne did very well in her first summer games swimming well in her 25m Backstroke and 25m Freestyle finals and followed up with an excellent silver medal in a very exciting 50m Backstroke final. The team did super well working together to win a fantastic bronze medal in 4 x 25m Freestyle Relay to cap off an excellent overall summer games event for the Rotorua swim team.



Coaches and Volunteers

Special Olympics New Zealand requirements for athlete attendance at the National Summer Games is that there be one volunteer for every four athletes, with one to one ratio where an athlete needs the support. We are very lucky to have dedicated volunteers, many that took time off work to ensure the games were a success for our athletes.

10 Pin Bowling – Shona Gibbs (Coach), Maxine Smith, Kylie Stampa, Simon Sherborne, Margaret Boielle.

Bocce – Christine Brewer (Coach), Michelle Douthett

Football – Russell George (Coach), Kirstin Dawson, Andrew Dawson

Indoor Bowls – Nicholas van den Broek (Coach), Tegan Stampa

Swimming – David Blackmore (Coach), Sonya Sherborne, Stella McLeod

Assistant Head of Delegation – Belinda Herbert

Head of Delegation – Jill Allely

Healthy Athletes Programme

The Healthy Athletes Programme for the 2025 National Summer Games offered every athlete the opportunity to be screened by health professionals from all over New Zealand in a fun and safe environment. We were able to get every athlete to at least three of the programs, with all going through the Opening Eyes program. Any important issues were recorded and advised either to the athletes or to family. If major the DHB's were to be informed. The programme consisted:

Fit Feet – offering podiatric screenings to evaluate ankles, feet, lower extremity bio-mechanics and proper shoe and sock gear to participating athletes. Several of the team had foot issues and some were treated on the spot for wounds.

Opening Eyes – The Special Olympics Lions Club International Opening Eyes programme changes lives in communities across the globe, providing free eye assessments, prescription eyewear, sunglasses to those that do not require glasses and sports goggles. We had several athletes requiring prescription glasses for the first time, which will be sent to them in 2026. Those that currently wore glasses were checked that their current prescription was correct and issued with new glasses. We had athletes with unknown cataracts, blindness and other less severe issues all of which were recorded for the athletes to advise family/whanau when home.

Healthy Hearing – The amount of ear problems and hearing loss among Special Olympics athletes is greater than found in the general population with up to 40% experiencing hearing difficulties. So providing free hearing screenings was important.

Special Smiles – This service provides comprehensive oral health care information, offers free dental screenings and instructions on correct brushing and flossing techniques to the athletes. Toothbrushes and other products were provided to the athletes.

Health Promotion – this area focuses on healthy living, healthy lifestyle choices and health-specific issues. Screenings were offered for bone density, blood pressure and body mass index. It's goal includes encouraging and enhancing healthy behaviours and improving self-efficacy and self advocacy.



Sightseeing

Arriving a day before the National Summer Games started meant we had Wednesday morning free. With the majority of athletes arriving we knew it would be busy at the accommodation and with many athletes never having been to Christchurch before we took the opportunity to do some sightseeing. As it was a very hot day we didn't want athletes outside getting sunburnt and tired so we went to the Antarctic Centre. This was possible by all the support from those contributing to our raffles, BBQ's and other fundraisers. The Antarctic Centre gave us a wonderful deal and provided a once in a life time experience to our athletes who got to see the huskies, experience a snow storm, see and hear about penguins and more.



With the Closing Ceremony and disco not starting until Sunday evening the athletes not competing in the morning took the opportunity to look around Christchurch city. Many got to travel on the Christchurch tram and have lunch in Hagley Park.



Thank you

Our attendance at the Games was reliant on support from many fundholders, businesses and individuals. Many thanks to the Freemasons Lodge , Rotorua Trust, NZCT, Rotary Sunrise, Rotorua Sulphur City Lions, Rotorua Lions East, Ray White Real Estate, Aroha NZ, Eliora Charitable Trust, Holland Beckett and all the other wonderful local individuals, firms and family who supported the team. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for many athletes, some who had never flown before and many who had never been to Christchurch. It was a real pleasure to be Head of Delegation for the Rotorua team again. So many athletes had personal bests, seeing athletes meet their friends they hadn't seen since the last National Summer Games, athletes handling the week outside their normal life made me so proud, We couldn't have taken one of the largest teams to the National Games without your support.

Lastly we thank our volunteers who worked tirelessly before, during and after the Games to ensure the athletes had the best care for the week to enable them to reach their goals. We shed a few tears and had many laughs at the success of our athletes and the joy of their endeavours.

Special Olympics Rotorua thanks you all. Please visit us on our Facebook page for photos.

LET ME WIN, BUT IF I CAN NOT WIN LET ME BE BRAVE IN THE ATTEMPT
(Special Olympics Motto)

From Special Olympics Rotorua
NSG Head of Delegation: Jill Allely
NSG Assistant Head of Delegation: Belinda Herbert