

## Media Release

*For Immediate Release*

**Date: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

### **LOTTO Sport Maker Finalists in West Auckland**

Sport Volunteers are the lifeblood of sport in New Zealand and without them sport would simply not happen. There are nearly one million volunteers in New Zealand who give up their time for sport so Lotto NZ and Sport NZ have teamed up to reward them for the work that they do.

The last round of nominations saw over 750 volunteers nominated from throughout the country with one of the ten finalists being Steve and Debbie Hitakahiwai, the coach and manager duo from Waitakere Bears Softball Club.

Prizes of \$2,000 worth of Lotto Volunteers sports gear is given to ten deserving Sport Makers three times a year, with one of these Sport Maker finalists also winning an ultimate team experience through public vote.

Steve and Debbie Hitakahiwai have been volunteering their time as Coach and Manager for Waitakere Bears Softball Club for many years, and on Saturday along with their U15 girls team, were surprised by Sport Waitakere after their home game with a presentation.

Nominated by current players and parents, Steve is described as having a “passion for Softball that shows at every training.” Alongside Debbie his ‘manager extrodinair,’ their combined effort is an asset to their club. For this husband and wife team “Softball is life.” Steve and Debbie have worked with many different teams throughout the years and have continued coaching and managing at Waitakere Bears Softball Club after their own children have finished playing.

As finalists, Steve and Debbie’s journey as Lotto Sport Makers isn’t over yet. In early March voting will open nation wide for the ten Sport Maker finalists, to win the ultimate team experience. Sport Waitakere are asking all West Aucklanders to go to [www.lottovolunteers.co.nz](http://www.lottovolunteers.co.nz) and vote for Steve, Debbie and their U15 Girls Waitakere Bears Softball team to win the ultimate team experience.

**ENDS**

### **About Sport Waitakere**

Sport Waitakere is a regional sports trust making a difference in West Auckland through sport and recreation. We do this by providing sport & recreation programmes, events, training and support. We believe in the value of sport and that everyone deserves the opportunity to participate.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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*Debbie and Steve Hitakahiwai, Waitakere Bears U15 Girls Softball Manager and Coach. Photo Credit Julie Bennett*