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EASTERN SUBURBS GYMNASTICS CLUB ON A ROLL

You could say Eastern Suburbs Gymnastics Club is on a forward roll as it heads into 2018. With plans for growth and some of the country's top gymnasts training for national recognition, it's going to be a big year.

The club recently closed out 2017 on a high with a number of local gymnasts winning national titles at the Gymnastics Nationals in Nelson. Anya Stephan, Sofia Kelliher, India Nichols, Valerie Lau, Maisie Braem and Ella Wong competed at the event as part of the Auckland Women's Artistic Gymnastics Team, coming away with several all-around places and accolades for best uneven bar and vault in the country.

Over the years, the club has punched above its weight in national competitions, testimony to the pathway that has been created for pre-schoolers with talent to progress to recreational and then competitive gymnastics.

President Stefan Lecchi says servicing the local community is the first goal of the Glen Innes-based club, with gymnastics being a foundation sport that can underpin success in other sports, teaching children strength, flexibility, confidence, courage and teamwork.

The club now caters to almost 700 members across its playgym, recreational, competitive and school holiday programmes. With so many members, the club has been bursting at the seams, making the move to a new building a priority.

“A big focus of 2018 will be on laying the foundation to move to bigger premises in Colin Maiden Park, after the Orakei Board allocated land to the club as part of the master plan. We have drawn up concept plans for a new gym and hope to make progress next year with leasing arrangements, finalization of the planning and development timelines, and the funding model.”

Mr Lecchi says ESGC is immensely grateful for the support in 2017 of council and funding partners such as NZCT, Foundation North and Four Winds. NZCT recently provided a grant to replace the main sprung floor in the building, giving young tumblers in the club a definite ‘boost’.

“We’ve been fundraising hard in preparation for a move to new premises,” he says. “Building a new facility from scratch is going to be financially challenging so we’d love to hear from businesses who are passionate about community sport and able to help out – either with sponsorship or goods and services.”

In the meantime, it’s business as usual at the club with gymnasts working hard in advance of the 2018 season. “From the seniors training upwards of 20 hours a week to master the harder skills, to the little dots learning how to do a forward roll, I am constantly amazed at the commitment and determination of the athletes, along with the skill and experience of our coaches,” Mr Lecchi says.

CAPTION: Eastern Suburbs Club senior gymnasts competed at the New Zealand Nationals In Nelson as part of the Auckland Womens Artistic Gymnastics Team. From left are, India Nichols from Howick, Maisie Braem and Ella Wong of Remuera, Anya Stephan from Parnell and in full flight, Sofia Kelliher.

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