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Team Red - NIWA

10 July 2019

Dr Natalie Robinson spends five weeks a year down in Antarctica gathering data to better understand the impacts of climate change. The rest of the year she's back in her Wellington office where she analyses her findings and fronts her workplace's Team Red.



Team Red is a New Zealand Blood Service (NZBS) group donation programme that strives to make it as easy as possible for people in any group or organisation to participate in the essential lifesaving activity of donating blood.

Dr Robinson has been working for the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) as a marine physicist for the last 15 years, and for the last two, has become NIWA's Team Red captain.

"Antarctica is a whole other world – I'm always overwhelmed by the sounds and sights down there. It never ceases to amaze me", says Dr Robinson. "It's a magical place that we get to explore, all in the hopes of tackling issues like sea level rise, global warming, drastic weather change, and so much more".

Dr Robinson says NIWA is already in the planet-saving business, so a group donation programme was simply a natural fit.

"It was no surprise an initiative like Team Red would flourish here. We're a group of mindful professionals and knowing one single donation has the potential to save up to three lives is more than enough to commit", says Dr Robinson.

"We've got 22 Team Red members on board. Some are in their first year of donating; several are milestone donors already and a few have just switched from whole blood to plasma since being part of Team Red".

Dr Robinson was a dedicated whole blood and plasma donor herself until July 2018 when she was diagnosed with skin cancer, which she's been closely monitoring since. Despite her own blood donor journey having come to an abrupt stop, she's taken it upon herself to take up the Team Red captain role which has allowed her to continue supporting NZBS and help save lives.

"The work we do at NIWA is eye opening. We're learning first-hand how climate change is impacting our world and it's through our research that we'll be better equipped to tackle these challenges head on. Nobody else is going to rescue our planet, we have to do it ourselves.

"The same goes for blood donations, there's no substitute for blood – it's up to the volunteers across New Zealand who take time out of their days to make a selfless donation. In this way, NIWA and the act of donating blood truly go hand in hand, because in the end, it all goes towards making this world that little bit better".

Whether she's down in Antarctica, working from a modified shipping container or getting acquainted again to the sounds of civilization at her Wellington office, she's working hard to better the planet and strongly encourages anyone eligible to join her by signing up to become a donor.

To find out more about how you can become a blood donor, click [here](#) or call 0800 GIVE BLOOD.

[↩ Back to top](#)



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