

13 October 2025

PN Rotary News

President Dave is “our of action” for the month. All the best for recovery

PAST President John Freebairn will lead the club in Dave’s absence

Brew Union Friday Drinks

Brew Union drinks to be held Friday Friday 31st October- all welcome.

Christmas Pudding Fundraiser

Let Stu Schwartz know if you want Christmas Puddings Each pudding worth \$7.00 for Rotary.

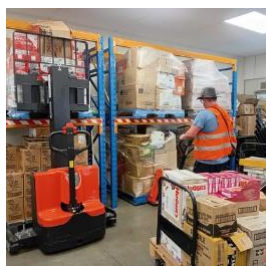


New Constitution and AGM

An AGM/Club Day now 10 November 2025.

Croquet

Competition starts Tuesday 14 Oct 5.30-6.30.



Next meeting Monday 20th October 2025

Speaker Rebecca Culver -- Managing
Director **Just Zilch - Food Rescue & Free Store**

Intro /Thanks	P.P. John Freebairn.
Attendance	Leslie Boulton
Sergeant	Nigel Withell
Corporal	Martin Townend
Parting thought	Phillip Boulton
Bulletin Editor	Steve Parsons

Attendance 13th October -- 18

Sergeant's collection \$37.50 + Internet giving.

Report on Monday 13th October



Guest Speaker Summary – Michelle Hazeleger-Mollard (Kiwibots)

Topic: Robotics & STEM Education in New Zealand

Role: National Operations Manager, [Kiwibots](https://www.kiwibots.co.nz/)

Event: Speaker introduction and presentation

👋 Introduction & Personal Background

- Michelle is the National Operations Manager for **Kiwibots**, the national robotics education and competition organisation.

- She was a **teacher for 15 years**, working in South Canterbury.
- She is married with **four children**, and her family story connects the Netherlands (father's origins), Gore (her upbringing), Taranaki (mother's side), and Palmerston North (husband's hometown).
- Her children are involved in creative and STEM fields:
 - Her eldest works in graphic design in Wellington.
 - Her second eldest and a teammate were contestants on **Lego Masters NZ Season 2**; he now works with Lego in Denmark.
 - Her other two daughters are studying at Massey University and St Peter's School.

- **Primary & Intermediate Nationals** are held annually at Fly Palmy Arena (Palmerston North) in December.
- **High School Nationals** are in Auckland in February, and **University Championships** take place in January.
- The competition structure focuses on:
 - **Collaboration** – Teams must partner with others during matches.
 - **Innovation** – Continuous design improvement is tracked in **engineering notebooks**.
 - **Soft skills** – Communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving are emphasised as
- The top award is the **Excellence Award**, recognising design process, innovation, and teamwork—not just winning matches.

NZ About Kiwibots & Their Impact

- **Kiwibots** runs the **largest school robotics programme in New Zealand**, and is part of the **largest team robotics programme in the world** (through the U.S.-based Robotics Education & Competition Foundation).
- They currently operate in **~300 schools** nationwide.
- There are **200 competition teams** across primary, intermediate, high school, and university levels.
- Each year, around **100 students travel to the World Championships in Dallas, Texas**, joining over **8,000 competitors** from 800+ teams internationally.
- Kiwibots recently **won the American Chamber of Commerce Social Impact Award** for their work fostering international partnerships and STEM education.

Educational Focus & Vision

- Kiwibots works with children **from age 5 through university**, integrating robotics into the **Digital Technologies Curriculum**.
- Programs build skills progressively:
 - Early years: Coding and robotics basics.
 - Secondary: Complex problem-solving and team-based competitions.
 - Tertiary: Engineering and mechatronics pathways.
- Many alumni pursue **engineering degrees** at University of Auckland, Canterbury, or overseas.
- Michelle noted with regret that Massey University has discontinued its mechatronics engineering degree—a loss for local pathways.

Competitions & Pathways

Key Messages

- Robotics is **not just about technology**—it builds critical **21st-century skills**.
- Success relies on **collaboration**, not individual competition.
- There are significant **opportunities for students to connect globally**, often working with peers who speak different languages using tools like Google Translate and sign language to collaborate in competitions.
- Kiwibots relies on a network of **100+ volunteers**, with Michelle currently being the **only paid staff member**.
- She encouraged attendees to **visit the upcoming nationals**, volunteer, or get involved to support the growing movement.



Michelle's talk blended personal storytelling with an inspiring overview of how Kiwibots is transforming STEM education in New Zealand. She emphasised how robotics offers young people not only technical skills but also creativity, teamwork, and global connections that prepare them for the future workforce.

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-sorry for the repeat

Parting Thought from John Brunsdon:

"Life is like a flat tyre. You can't fix it unless you change it."

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