

Golden Shovel Award

The 5S Society – Frank O’Callaghan

June 2022

The infamous Frank O’Callaghan from Iplex NZ has been shoulder-tapped to become an exclusive member of the NZ Chapter of the International Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers for his lifelong commitment and passion to the water, stormwater and wastewater industry. National Technical Manager Frank received his exclusive Golden Shovel Lapel Pin at the NZ Water Conference in Hamilton on 28 May.

There are chapters of the International Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers (or 5S) in the USA, Canada, UK, Netherlands, and of course here in Aotearoa.

5S Members identify by wearing a gold shovel lapel badge – a symbol that relates to obtaining the highest ridge of the sludge bed – an inside reference and in terms of the honour bestowed on members.

“I’m honoured to get this opportunity to be part of 5S. The pipeline business has taught me to always remain totally focused on our customers’ needs and always deliver excellence in whatever I do. That’s my personal goal and what our customers have every right to expect. Our customers are the people that allow the Iplex business to exist,” says Frank.

“My phone is always on, including during the Covid pandemic, evenings, weekends, and holidays because if a customer wants to talk, I want to take that call immediately.”

Frank has been a stalwart of the plastic pipe systems industry for 44 years.



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He started on the factory production floor at Iplex in 1977 – where he became hooked by the business and has remained ever since. In 1983 he became the National Technical Manager, a position he still holds today - nearly 40 years later.



In fact, there are very few in the industry that don’t know who Frank is.

The exclusive Golden Shovel Lapel Pin.

He has been at the forefront of the development and implementation of the use of plastic pipes, including introducing the use of PVC and polyethylene materials as pipe. He is involved in the writing and maintenance for most of the manufacturing and installation industry standards for plastics pipeline systems used in Australasia.

He’s worked frequently in Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Islands, delivering technical support and on-site training to export customers and end users of our pipes, researched and delivered various technical papers on the successful performance of pipeline systems, and provide technical advice to customers on how to install pipes properly the first time.

He is sought after in the industry for his technical knowledge and continues to work tirelessly in the area of seismic solutions and the performance of pipes.

“What a fantastic achievement and amazing honour for Frank to be recognised by industry for his outstanding contribution, I know he’ll be super proud like we all are at Team Iplex – great to have him representing our business!” says Iplex General Manager Jeremy Silcock.

Frank is also a competitive black powder muzzleloader and National Target Shooting Champion (with six gold medals and three silver medals at a national level) and does Toi Whakairo (traditional Maori wood carving).

Ngā akoranga hei tohatoha
Learning to share



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