

John Black

This nomination recognises the extensive contribution that John Black has made to the NZ water industry over 57 years. The last 25 years of his career have been with engineering consultants Opus – now WSP.

In this extensive career he has had a particular focus on pipe condition assessment and pipeline materials selection. He has completed pipe condition assessment for over 50 NZ local authorities from Invercargill City to Far North DC as well as in Australia. His self-appointed title has been Chief Pipe Whisperer – not because he talks to pipes. In his words – “pipes talk to him, they tell him a lot”.

John is a leader in his field nationally and is also internationally recognised through membership and active participation in Australia and NZ Joint Standards committee on pipeline assessment design and materials.

He has pioneered a range of pipe condition assessment techniques, including the use of computed tomography (CT) scanning for measuring deterioration of pipes. This information has been invaluable to the NZ water industry to enable evidenced based decision making for infrastructure investment in NZ’s underground assets.

He has authored many papers and publications on pipe materials and condition assessment. He has been the author of guidelines and training material.

At the forefront of my mind is John as a person. If you go past the Canterbury man with a red and black eye patch, there is warmth, friendliness and passion.

John was in his element when training people. I personally witnessed classes of operational people who hate being bound to a classroom desk come alive when John was at the front of the class. He made learning practical and fun.

John’s technical expertise has made water engineers throughout NZ aware of the challenges we face with our aging underground assets. Equally important is that John Black has created a legacy amongst younger engineers who now understand the importance of understanding the condition and management of our underground assets.

John has contributed to the water sector and this association above and beyond the call of duty and is a worthy recipient of a golden shovel.

Proposed Rob Blakemore

Seconded Stu Craib