

Summer 2021



## FLOWBACK

The periodical of the Water  
New Zealand Backflow Group

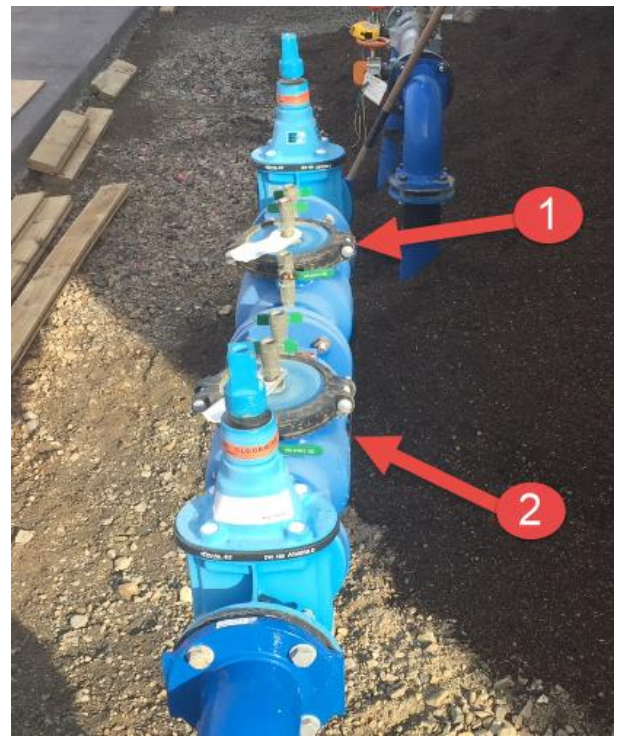
Kia Ora! It's been a busy few months for the Backflow Group. In August we were extremely lucky to have the largest Conference we have ever had take place within the margins of Covid lockdowns and travel bubble closures. Since then, the Group has been adapting to changes brought about by the new water regulator, Taumata Arowai. This is the most significant change we are likely to see in our lifetimes in terms of how New Zealand manages, controls and treats the water we all hold so dear.

The Backflow Committee meets regularly, and the next meetings are scheduled for December, February 2022 and April 2022. Of course, with Covid our meeting schedule now needs to be more flexible and like most people we are make the most of virtual meetings.

## Installation Inspiration

New Zealand has given the world many great inventions; the egg beater, the referee's whistle and the Pavlova. Though that latter one is disputed by our disgruntled cousins across the ditch, the Aussies cannot possibly argue about this next one which was recently invented in Auckland.

I present to you the double, double check backflow device. Either the work of a madman or genius this beauty should only be used when all other acceptable options have failed or when money is not an object to rational thought. Offering twice the protection of a double check device at exactly twice the price, you can be sure that any property protected by such a DDCCD will draw in backflow professionals from all over. For all the wrong reasons, sadly.





*Kevin started his career as an electrician serving his time in Shannon and in later life settling in Te Puke.*

*In the late eighties he landed himself a job as CEO of RMC New Zealand based in Mt Maunganui and became a driving force in striving for backflow to be taken seriously in New Zealand. He served as a technical advisor for the inclusion of backflow in the Building Act and, realising that we needed good people trained in backflow to implement this legal approach, he set up and ran the early IQP training courses free of charge throughout New Zealand. He was also one of the founders of the Backflow Association of NZ and was instrumental in the creation of the current 40-hour backflow course which is the gold standard for testers and plumbers. He has been involved in many water industry projects from overarching legislative perspectives to the writing of the Code of Practice (with Honorary Life Member Graeme Mills) and has a unique ability to understand and grasp the various intricacies of the Health and Building Acts. This ability makes him not only an invaluable member of the Backflow Group but also sees him much in demand by fellow professionals seeking out his wisdom.*

*Always eager to share this vast knowledge, he developed the Boundary Backflow Path of Excellence for the Water NZ Water Managers Group to clarify the Health Act as a model for the protection of drinking water, presented the New Zealand model across the pond and continues to be a source of inspiration with his understanding of the aforementioned Acts.*

*Kevin retired some 10 years ago and despite suffering a recent critical illness and personal tragedy he continues to be involved in the industry he loves, advocating training and development for the next generation of water professionals. In his many years in the industry he has seen it all and yet is not jaded in his approach. In fact, he is unerringly optimistic and willing to try new things to make the processes easier for all concerned.*

*Kevin's passion is for NZ to have safe drinking water from the source until the last flowing tap and everything he has achieved has brought us closer to that goal.*

*Kevin Healy is nothing short of a legend in the Plumbing and Water circles and, as a result of his dedication and passion, the backflow industry is what it is today.*

*This backflow legend was recently awarded the Golden Check by outgoing Chair Jim McGibbon.*





# GROUP WORKPLAN

## 1. **WS-014/WS-023**

Both Wayne Shields and Richard Aitken are inputting into these Committees along with our BPAA colleagues. Some of the key factors will be ensuring joint standards are reflective of the current market and making sure that a consistent approach is applied on both sides of the Tasman. A tricky task!

## 2. **G12 update**

The group will be working with Ross Wakefield (MBIE) to go through proposed changes to G12. This will be a rare opportunity to update G12 to be reflective of the current state of backflow prevention and in doing so make it more coordinated with the new Water Services Bill.

## 3. **Backflow training**

Jim McGibbon will be working with Mumtaz Parker from the Water New Zealand Training team to put together an entry level understanding of backflow prevention that can be used for staff training. All too often in the industry we see staff who have little knowledge of backflow prevention, water quality or reticulation practices and Water New Zealand is looking to bridge this gap with their “101” series of modules.

## 4. **Code of Practice**

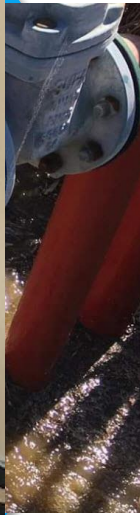
The Backflow COP has been in a holding pattern since the end of 2019 until the new Water Bill and Regulator were confirmed. Now that this is a done deal, the Group can refine the COP and make references to the new Bill plus the responsibilities of each new authority under the Backflow Rules.

## 5. **Survey unit standards**

A big part of the new regime will focus on property surveys to ensure that cross connections are addressed. Getting a properly accredited survey programme will be a challenge and survey experts Richard Aitken and Jon Lewis will be driving this forward.

## 6. **Backflow Rules**

The Rules laid down by Taumata Arowai are still in draft form and will need to be firmed up. The Group will be working with the drafter, Jim Graham of Taumata Arowai, to make sure this happens quickly. These Rules will underpin everything that the new Bill is trying to accomplish with regard to backflow prevention so we must make sure they are fair, effective and robust.



## UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

**Paul van den Berg**

Kia ora and Hello Everyone,

Firstly, I would like to thank all who attended, sponsored, organized, supported, exhibited or presented at the Backflow Conference in August this year. As mentioned previously, this was the largest conference we have held and the Group received a lot of positive feedback from across the Industry. Also, special appearances from our BPAA colleagues in Australia, and Lisa Carrington who joined us from Tokyo, powering through 200meters. Pure Gold.

We have some new faces on the committee which is great for the Backflow Group as we plan to navigate our way through the issues in the coming years. In our October committee meeting, we confirmed our workplan for the coming year and there is a lot of work to do. To make progress in these areas, we will be talking with the likes of MBIE, the Plumbing Industry and other stakeholders who wish to contribute.

One improvement, as a group we are committed to, is to communicate better with the industry and regular issues of Flowback is one way to do this. As our workplan progresses we will include this in future issues of Flowback to keep everyone in the loop. Huge thanks to Jim Mc Gibbon, our resident Charles Dickens, and Katrina at Water NZ for picking up the challenge to make this a regular publication.

If you have any discussions or articles, you would like included, please let us know. You can email Jim at [jim.mcgibbon@water.co.nz](mailto:jim.mcgibbon@water.co.nz) or Katrina at [katrina.guy@watarnz.org.nz](mailto:katrina.guy@watarnz.org.nz) with any submissions, questions or comments.

Irrespective of the Red, Orange or Green traffic light area we live in, I hope you all are able to enjoy Christmas with family or friends and can put your feet up, with a cold one and see in the New Year, relaxing. As I have no doubt next year is not going to be plain sailing.

Nga mihi, Noho ora mai, | Kind regards

Paul van den Berg