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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**What is in a Name?**



**Prime Minister John Key says the Ministry for Vulnerable Children that's going to be created has the right name.**

The Ministry will replace Child, Youth and Family from April next year.

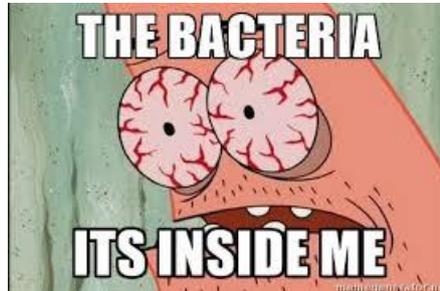
There has been some criticism of the name but the Prime Minister has defended the name stating:

*"If you don't call it what it is, there's a risk it loses its focus and starts spending resources and time away from those most in need"*

Very interesting comment when you look at the Ministries that we as an industry have to deal with.

Does the comment above

**It Had to Happen Eventually**



It had to happen eventually - where a large group of people become sick from bacteria in a water supply. It's becoming clearer that the gastro bug that's made thousands of people sick in Havelock North is from the campylobacter bacterium.

Campylobacter causes campylobacteriosis, a gastrointestinal infection with symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting, fever and pain. Symptoms could last up to 10 days but would usually get better without antibiotics.

Campylobacter can't be spread through the air, but it can be spread if you swallow the bacteria. This may be from contaminated water and food, or from contact with infected people.

The number of people affected has been reported to be over 4,000. An inquiry will be held to determine how an unprecedented outbreak of campylobacter in contaminated water was able to infect so many people.

Health Minister Jonathan Coleman said it was important for the public to have confidence in their water supply so the inquiry would look at the events surrounding the outbreak, the response and any wider systemic issues.

"This will be a wide-ranging inquiry to ensure that all New Zealanders can feel confident about the quality of drinking water supplies," he said.

The source of the contamination hadn't been identified at the time of writing this article.

Those in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry know there are numerous ways contamination can occur such as cross connections, backflow or direct contamination to name a few. This contamination shows how easy and quickly contamination can occur and is a timely reminder for us as an industry to maintain our standards and vigilance!

This incident has cost the residents of a small town economically and medically. Imagine the impact if it had been one of the major cities.

mean we will have a series of Ministries called the "Ministries of Inept Action" (MIA)

We thought MIA was already taken by "Missing in Action" which could be interpreted to be in line with the description as well.

If the Prime Minister stands by what he is saying then perhaps the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board should be exactly that - a Board for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers with a focus on plumber's gasfitters and drainlayers operating in the industry.

Name it what it is, and what it does, rings true to our ears.

The same could be said for qualifications where perhaps they should be used as an indicator for what they are and what the person can do.

Keeping it simple is sometimes the best and cheapest way. It saves a lot of confusion and expense.

It's incredible the Government have set aside \$200 million, the equivalent of 59 years of running costs for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, for the revamp of Child, Youth and Family.

A worthy investment but so is the health and safety of the public of New Zealand, where the only people investing in the Public Health and Safety

We know people ignore the role of our industry but in many ways, we are the first line of defence for the public and we should be letting them know it. Don't be afraid to tell people we are the first line of defence for their health and safety and that they should only use qualified tradespeople.

We have no doubt the victims of the contamination will be speaking up wanting answers.

## From the Media



### **WorkSafe launches 10-year plan**

NZ Newswire on August 11, 2016, 4:02 am

WorkSafe New Zealand has launched a 10-year plan to reduce health risks in the workplace.

It outlines the approach WorkSafe will take to

enable businesses to better manage work-related risks which kill between 600 and 900 people a year.

Another 30,000 are left with serious health problems.

"Each one of those figures is a real person who has died or has become unwell as a result of their work," Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Michael Woodhouse said when the plan was launched on Wednesday night.

"For too long we've put work-related health in the too hard basket."

Mr Woodhouse says that with strong leadership, and everyone demonstrating greater accountability, significantly improved outcomes can be achieved.

The plan aims to raise awareness of harm and risks, encourage collaboration, minimise risks and using the education system to improve understanding.

WorkSafe chairman Professor Gregor Coster says there will be "targeted intervention programmes".

"Beyond the high human cost to individuals, their families, whanau and communities, work-related diseases cost this country \$2.4 billion a year," he said.

"The human and financial costs are simply unacceptable."

### **Comment:**

There is no doubt everyone deserves to come home at the end of a

are the tradespeople in the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry.

Its shows the Government's priorities are on the high profile issues to get the votes and the real nuts and bolts issues that keep the country running are left to survive of their own fruition.

The nuts and bolts issues seem to be left until it is too late and then blame is put on anyone but the Government and their Ministries.

This isn't a go at National as Labour has also contributed to the demise of our industry and whoever decided to put plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers under the construction/building and housing portfolio needs a good swift kick up the rear end.

It was amazing that whilst under the health portfolio, there were very few issues in the industry, but as soon as we were transferred to construction / building and housing, it all turned.

Perhaps the calibre of the Ministers is different and perhaps the Ministers there have been in Health have actually cared about the work of plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.

Therefore, what is in a name – well a great deal if you listen to the Prime Minister but what is needed behind the name is even more important - such as leadership,

working day and that they should not be exposed to health issues but when we see words such as greater accountability and targeted interventions it makes us nervous and we wonder if forced compliance is upon us again.

The Government continually talks about the cost of lives but how do they help businesses with the cost of preventative measures? What help does small business get? It appears we get constant threats of enforcement action and advice which takes money from our bottom line so it's no wonder more and more business owners become the victims of stress related illnesses.

For every dollar taken away from a business to meet legislative requirements it takes every worker a dollar further away from a wage increase.

Worksafe stated the first-year interventions aim to lay the foundation for critical strategic activities in the coming years through:

- establishing robust, evidence-based programmes of work,
- beginning to implement a broad and systematic approach to surveillance and intelligence, and
- continuing our proactive inspections on prioritised work-related health risks.

In addition to the strategic activities outlined, they will continue to proactively engage duty holders on a range of work-related health risks through our Inspectorate.

Look at some of the key words in their statement, *evidence-based programmes of work, surveillance and intelligence, proactive inspections and proactively engage duty holders on a range of work-related health risks through our Inspectorate*- seems like a lot of attributes of enforcement and very little educative and financial assistance.

Small to medium sized businesses are the lifeblood of New Zealand but yet big business and the Government set the rules for health and safety and they are the only two organisations that can afford to meet the requirements. Is this a ploy to push small and medium business out so big business can take over?

Those of us in the trenches looking up understand a couple of things – big business who we traditionally work for as subbies are all for getting a lot of paperwork in around health and safety, but are less interested in walking the walk – often while the desk sitters are ticking all the boxes – the work site people are pushing to get things done so programmes don't fall behind. It's all good until it looks like targets and timeframes won't be met. What we don't want to see if this new legislation become a bullshit castle of administrative twaddle.

One of the things Worksafe could have put in their strategic plan is

honesty, integrity and trust.

All those things can build a real organisation that can achieve its purpose.

Send us your thoughts and ideas about what you want in the future from our industry.

to ensure they can explain the legislation in plain English to those it affects. One of our members dutifully attended a rather packed seminar on the new Act and when they got the opportunity to ask some questions – the constant mantra from the presenter (from Worksafe) was – “The Courts will decide”. Well this person didn’t want to be caught up in that which was why they were asking the questions. Not ideal in our opinion.

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