

# The cleaning never stops

WHILE many of us sleep or relax between work hours, an army of people across the country moves in to clean up our messes.

Today is Thank Your Cleaner Day, an apparent world first dreamed up by the Building Service Contractors of New Zealand – a trade body representing this country's cleaning industry.

BSCNZ chief executive Lillian Small said the value and skill contributed by “tens of thousands” of cleaners – who collectively worked around the clock to keep the country's working and living environments clean, safe and hygienic – was being recognised today.

“Cleaning is one of the most important industries in the world, yet most people undertaking this important work are invisible to us,” Ms Small said.

She said 84 percent of workers independently surveyed for BSCNZ described their mood as being affected by an unclean work space.

“Twenty-one percent of Bay of Plenty workers said workplace cleanliness affected their mood,” she said.

The same proportion were mindful of sharing their work space and equipment with sick people, and 53 percent were convinced this winter's cold and flu virus season, the worst in years, was caused by superbugs.

Ms Small said 39 percent of workers were concerned if there were sick people at work.

Psychologist Sara Chatwin said people were influenced by their surroundings and could become anxious about disease and germs particularly on the back of this year's cold, wet winter.

Long-time Eastern Bay and Waikato dairy farmer Brian King ditched his gumboots for

gloves 14 months ago when he began working as a commercial cleaner for Outsourced Client Solutions.

Mr King is one of five staff who look after and clean amenities and offices at the Whakatane mill.

Some mornings he goes to work before 7am, returning home for a few hours before starting his regular afternoon shift.

Mr King said the team was allocated daily time frames for each department at the mill.

“My hours are four to five hours every afternoon, some days longer, depending on staff numbers,” he said.

The 62-year-old said he had a very good supervisor, which made a big difference to the team's overall morale.

Mr King only learned about Thank Your Cleaner Day this week and he thinks it is a good idea for people to appreciate and value the work done to prepare work spaces for the day ahead.

He said he believed any job was important, as long “as it is done right and you enjoy what you do”.

For almost 16-years Fred Marshall has been the unseen glue that binds your newspaper together.

Without him, the team at the **BEACON** would be in chaos and the paper would likely never make it to you. He is the man that vacuums up the dust that settles over the office during the days of hunting news, the gentle hand that clears away the multitude of teaspoons clogging the sink in the staff lunchroom, and the wonder who ensures the porcelain thrones in the shared facilities gleam.

Mr Marshall said he started his cleaning and lawn-moving business almost 16 years ago

and the **BEACON** was one of his first customers.

“It's been interesting, I have met lots of people. I've got absolutely no regrets.”

He said when he first started he offered a full-range of services but he had scaled that back and no longer offered gardening services.

“I used to do virtually everything back in the day but I've woken up now.”

Along with the **BEACON**, Mr Marshall cleans three other businesses in Whakatane and one sports club. He said he enjoyed his job.

“I am a builder by trade and it's like when you walk onto a vacant lot and a few months you walk off and there is a house there and you think: ‘yeah, I did that’ – it is the satisfaction of knowing that you did it. Well, cleaning is like that. I get immense job satisfaction out of doing a job well.”





**NEXT** time you enter a public toilet, spare a thought for the woman who does her best to ensure they are nice and clean.

Kathy Tamatea, pictured at the Otao Reserve toilets in Ohope, starts work at 5am every morning.

She opens and cleans all the town and Kopeopeo toilets then heads over to Ohope to do the toilets there.

She rechecks the facilities in town and Kopeopeo, and re-cleans them another three times, before finishing work for the day.

Mrs Tamatea has been a cleaner for 12 years and not only takes pride in her work, but enjoys her job.

She has been with OCS for four years and did the same job for Civic

Contractors, prior to OCS winning the Whakatane District Council contract.

According to OCS Whakatane operations manager Gail Robb, she never takes a sick day and when she does take leave, her husband, Scotty, covers.

“They are both highly-valued team members of the OCS family,” she said.

Photo Louis Klaassen D2781-10

# How filthy is your office desk?

■ 3256 germs per square centimetre exist on your mouse, keyboard and chair

■ A typical desk has 10 million bacteria, 100 times more germs than the average kitchen table and 400 times more germs than the average toilet seat

■ A computer keyboard catches nasal droppings, food, skin and hair - enough skin falls off a human in one day to fill a cup

■ Men's work spaces are 20 percent dirtier than women's, however, women have a higher bacteria load,

given they generally have more contact with children and bring their bacteria to work. Women often bring food to work, as well as cosmetics and lotions, which are the ideal bacteria carrier, and

■ The dirtiest surfaces in the office include keyboards and mouses, kitchen and fridge handles, microwave and vending machine buttons, and drinking fountain buttons.

■ Source: Building Service Contractors of New Zealand