

FACT SHEET: ONLY FLUSH THE 3P'S

- With toilet paper and other products in high demand it is important to remember that only the 3P's should be flushed down the toilet - Pee, Poo and toilet Paper!
- Practicing good hygiene is extremely important at this time - however, wet wipes, paper towel and tissues can create 'fatbergs' which result in blockages and extra costs for water utilities and customers
- We know these products are useful for personal hygiene and keeping households clean and safe, however they don't break down like toilet paper so they need to go in the bin and not the toilet
- WSAA estimates that blockages caused by wet wipes are costing the urban water industry millions of dollars each year
- WSAA is leading the development of an Australian Standard for Flushable Products which will include pass/fail criteria and labelling requirements
- Until the Standard is finalised we advise everyone to only flush the 3Ps – Pee, Poo and toilet Paper!

Why is what we flush a problem?

Wastewater systems are designed for human waste and toilet paper. Toilet paper breaks down quickly but while wet wipes may clear your toilet bowl, they do not break down quickly enough for our wastewater systems. This can lead to blockages and overflows into homes and creeks.

The exact cost of pipe blockages, disruption to customers and impacts on the environment are difficult to estimate accurately.

Customers who flush wipes pay a high price when they need to fix blockages on their own property. However, it's not just cost, it is also the impacts on the environment when wipes are found in rivers and on beaches.

Is there a Standard for labelling and specifications?

WSAA, along with its members, is leading the development of a national standard that will include pass/fail criteria along with appropriate labelling requirements.

An Australian Standard will provide manufacturers with clear specifications to design products that are compatible with wastewater networks. The draft Standard should be available for public comment in the coming months.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) initiated court action against Kimberly-Clark following its investigation into marketing and labelling of wet wipes products labelled 'flushable'. The Federal Court dismissed the case in June 2019 however an appeal was heard in late February 2020 and a decision is still pending.



Are wipes and fatberg a problem around the world?

Internationally, water utilities face the same issue with New York City's wastewater management saying removal of blockages with wet wipes cost \$18 million in the last 5 years.

WaterUK and UK media has reported costs of £100 million annually for water companies to clear blockages contributed to mainly by wet wipes. 93 per cent of blockage in the UK are caused mainly by wet wipes.

Questions about water and wastewater and COVID-19?

Water utilities are working hard to ensure customers continue to receive high quality drinking water and wastewater services.

More information on COVID-19 and water and wastewater services is available [here](#).

About WSAA

The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) is the peak industry body representing the urban water industry. Our members provide water and sewerage services to over 22 million customers in Australia and New Zealand and many of Australia's largest industrial and commercial enterprises.

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