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Hunter Water calls on customers to ‘Respect the Throne’

Hunter Water has renewed its calls for customers to only flush toilet paper, following an increase in blockages at its wastewater treatment plants.

Over the past five weeks, crews have had to remove blockages from pumps and screening equipment, as a result of more products like paper towel and wet wipes being flushed in the wake of the toilet paper shortage.

It's prompted the launch of a new awareness campaign calling on our customers and community to 'Respect the Throne'.

Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey, welcomed the launch of Hunter Water's new campaign.

"There has been a rise in non-flushable items such as wet wipes being disposed of down the toilet," Mrs Pavey said.

"Flushing alternatives to toilet paper – wet wipes, kitchen paper, newspaper or tissues - can have serious consequences for public health and the environment.

"The Lower Hunter has plenty of toilet paper – people just need to stop panic-buying it. If you must use an alternative to toilet paper, you must discard of it in a bin – no exceptions.

"It may seem convenient at the time, but it won't when the sewer overflows or when you have to engage a private plumber to clear a blockage in your plumbing." Mrs Pavey said.

Acting Executive Manager Service Delivery for Customers, Glen Robinson, said Hunter Water's strong message is to only ever flush pee, poo and toilet paper.

"We understand our customers may be feeling frustrated if they can't purchase toilet paper at the moment, but it's really important that if they need to use anything else, then they should bag and bin it instead," Mr Robinson said.

"Products such as paper towel, tissues and wet wipes don't break down quickly enough in water and can cause large, expensive blockages in our wastewater system or in a customer's own pipes at their cost and inconvenience.

"Our workers have reported seeing a significant increase in these materials, particularly at our Burwood and Belmont plants since the start of March, leading to blockages in our pumps and screening equipment.

"We have also removed an additional 22 tonnes of fatberg from our Morpeth wastewater treatment plant since the start of March."

For more information on how to 'Respect the Throne', visit www.hunterwater.com.au