1. The urban water cycle

Melbourne’s urban water cycle begins with the catchment of rainfall in the Thomson Reservoir, where it is stored for around five years. From there it flows down a 35 kilometre pipeline to the Upper Yarra Reservoir, where it is stored for another 12 months before being transferred to either Silvan or Cardinia Reservoirs. When the water leaves these reservoirs it is disinfected using chlorine, which kills off any harmful bugs, and fluoride is added for healthy teeth. The water is then piped to local storage tanks and transferred into homes.

Did you know?
- Melbourne is very special in that most of our water catchment areas (the areas around our reservoirs) are forested, which means that our water is very clean even before we treat it to be ready for drinking water.
- The Thomson Reservoir is our largest reservoir holding 1,068,000 million litres of water.

2. Our water supply system

The water supply system in Melbourne’s south east services 1.5 million customers and includes:
- 8 sewage treatment plants to clean and treat wastewater
- 80 pump stations to service customers located in higher ground areas
- 67 water storage facilities to store water close to where it is needed
- 8,748 kilometres of water supply mains
- 20 secondary disinfection plants to clean water
- 39 water quality locations to monitor the water supply 24/7.
3. After the flush

Have you ever wondered where the water goes after you have finished with it? This water is called wastewater or sewage and it travels through the drains and sewers to a sewage treatment plant.

Did you know?
- 300 million litres of wastewater is collected each day.

4. Sewage treatment plant

Wastewater can have some very interesting things in it. At the sewage treatment plant they find lots of toys, mobile phones, money and sometimes even false teeth, which should never have been flushed in the first place! These items need to be removed and the wastewater needs to be cleaned, which involves many processes. Once it has been cleaned, some of the water is returned to the ocean and some is recycled and supplied to farms, parks, golf courses, schools and even houses.

5. Activity time

Find the hidden message

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Find the following words to reveal a message about your toilet...

- TOILET
- DRAIN
- PIPES
- COTTONBUD
- SAFE
- TAPS
- COOKINGOIL
- NAPPIES
- CLEAN
- FOODSCRAPS
- WATER
- SEWAGE
- RECYCLED
- BUGS
- POO
- SUSTAINABLE
- FILTERED
- WASTE
- TREAT
- WEE
- SLUDGE

Find the hidden message

BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT YOU PUT DOWN YOUR DRAIN...

I’ _ ___ _  __________ _ _

6. More information

More information about water, the natural water cycle and sewage treatment can be found at southeastwater.com.au