

# It takes more than a tap to deliver your water

## Water's journey to your tap and beyond.

### 1. Water collection

Water is generally collected from natural surface water (rivers, dams, weirs) and groundwater water sources. Water can also be sourced from desalination plants that convert salt or brackish water into drinking water.

### 2. Water treatment

Water is pumped from its collection point and, in most cases, pumped to a water treatment plant where it is filtered and treated to remove material such as sediment, bacteria, viruses and pollutants.

### 3. Water pumping and storage

Once treated, water is now drinking quality and is pumped to storage tanks, usually at high points of elevation, so it can be fed by gravity to your property through underground water pipes.

### 4. Water pipes

Underground water pipes deliver clean drinking water to your home. All the water that goes down your drain, is flushed away in the toilet, or is used in your washing machine or dishwasher is collected in sewerage (wastewater) pipes and eventually makes its way to our land, waterways, or the ocean.

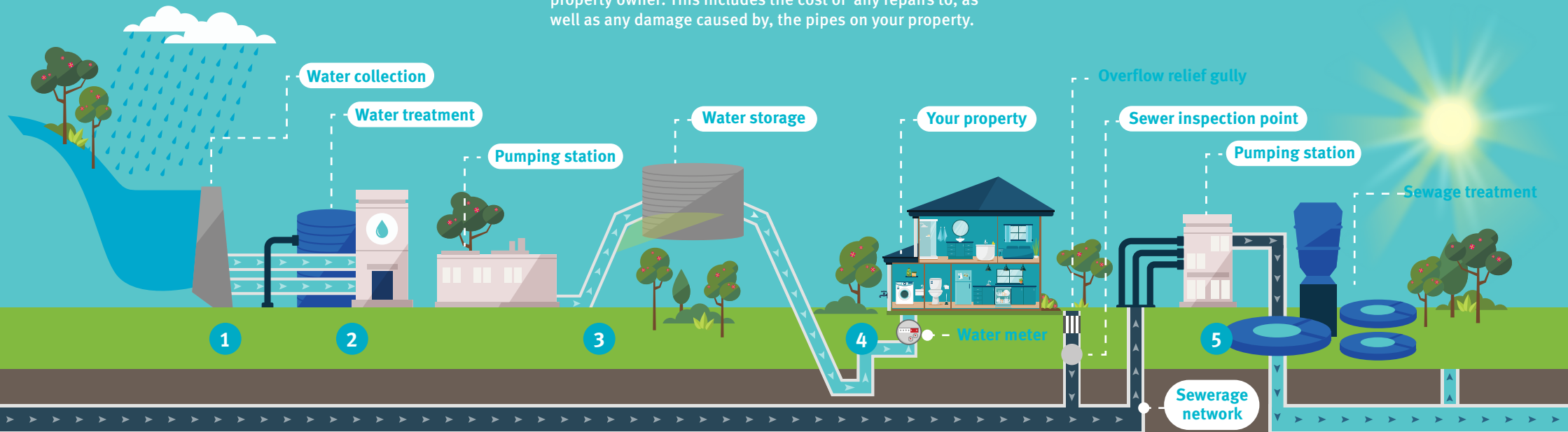
Everything on your side of the water meter and sewer inspection point is your responsibility to maintain as the property owner. This includes the cost of any repairs to, as well as any damage caused by, the pipes on your property.

### 5. Sewage treatment

Water that has been used in your home is pumped in sewerage pipes to a local sewerage treatment plant (wastewater treatment plant). In some communities, stormwater is also treated at a wastewater treatment plant. Here, wastewater goes through up to four stages of treatment to remove solid matter, fine particles and contaminants, as well as excess nutrients. The water is typically then disinfected before being released back to the environment. The treated wastewater is thoroughly tested, and the water quality monitored to ensure that water returned to the environment is clean and safe.

Wastewater that has been treated to a specified health standard can be reused for specific purposes, like on sports fields or crops.

In most cases it is your local council that is responsible for both supplying drinking water and removing and treating the wastewater in your community.



# Beyond the drain

## Maintaining your water pipes

- ◆ Make sure rainwater from your roof gutters is not directed into the sewerage system, because it could overload the system.
- ◆ There are plumbing requirements for overflow relief gullies. They should sit at least 150 mm lower than the lowest household drain to ensure that's where any sewerage will flow if there is a blockage. They should also be at least 75 mm above ground level to avoid collecting stormwater during heavy rain.

An overflow relief gully is a water trap installed in a property's sewerage system to prevent sewage overflow into your home. Once water exits your home, if there's a blockage in your pipes, the overflow relief gully ensures that water doesn't re-enter your home but is expelled outside. If you have any concerns about the overflow relief gully at your property, contact a licensed plumber.

- ◆ Look for any leaks, both inside your home and in the yard. Check out the water audit fact sheet to find out how you can detect a leak.



## Stop and think! Don't put these items down the sink (toilet or drain):

Be careful what you put down the drain as blockages might require a plumber to fix and can be costly to repair. Examples of items that can cause blockages in your pipes include:

- ◆ kitchen waste, including paper towels, produce stickers and food scraps (including rice, flour, eggshells)—all can build up and clog your pipes
- ◆ tea leaves and ground coffee—these can stick to built-up grease or get caught in screens and filters at the water treatment plant
- ◆ fats and oils—grease can solidify in pipes, making it difficult for water to flow
- ◆ contact lenses, Band-Aids, sanitary products and condoms—made of non-biodegradable material and can clog up pipes
- ◆ tissues, cotton balls, cotton buds—these are designed not to break apart easily
- ◆ dental floss—this can get caught around equipment at the water treatment plant
- ◆ baby wipes and disposable nappies—even if they are labelled flushable they can still cause blockages
- ◆ cosmetics, unused medications, chemicals (such as cleaning products, paint products, motor oil)—many of these contain chemicals that are hazardous to people and wildlife and degrade water quality, even when diluted
- ◆ cat litter—as well as clumping, it can expand and clog pipes.

Only the 3 Ps should be flushed down the toilet - pee, poo and (toilet) paper!

# Tips for creating a waterwise home



Scrape food scraps into your rubbish or compost bin before washing dishes.



Use a sink strainer to prevent any food scraps from washing down the drain.



Pour cooking oils and fats into a container, then seal the container and place it in your rubbish bin.



Use paper towel to soak up any residual cooking oil in pots and pans before washing them.



Wash paint brushes out in the garden.



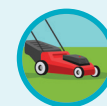
Use biodegradable washing powder and cleaners.



Always dispose of sanitary products, condoms, nappies, baby wipes and other items in the bin (even if labelled flushable).



Return unused medications to your local community pharmacy for disposal.



When mowing your footpath, put the grass clippings on your garden or lawn, or in the bin, so they don't wash into stormwater drains.