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## Hunter Water a national finalist in Banksia Sustainability Awards

Hunter Water has been named a finalist in the 'Marketing and Communications for Impact Award' category at the Banksia Foundation's National Banksia Sustainability Awards.

The nomination is in recognition of the Respect the Throne campaign which has served as a crucial tool for keeping wipes out of pipes and creating behavioural change during a global pandemic.

After taking out the Communications for Impact Award at the Banksia Foundation's 2022 NSW Sustainability Awards last year, Hunter Water Marketing and Business Communications Team Leader Alicia Fry is proud this important campaign is being recognised on the national stage.

"Like all other utilities, non-flushables are an ongoing issue for Hunter Water. The cost to us is about \$5 million per year in terms of maintaining our wastewater system. We have always had a high number of jobs for short-notice repairs and fixes due to non-flushables," said Ms Fry.

"But we received an early warning notification just after COVID-19 started. We saw a dramatic increase in wet wipes coming into our sewer networks right around the time when we had toilet paper shortages across the nation.

"People were flushing toilet paper alternatives. And with the warning, we knew we had to act fast, or we were going to have some very serious problems right across our network.

"Given the need for immediate behavioural change, Respect the Throne was designed and launched within six weeks."

With humour at its heart, the campaign's messaging was designed to empower the Lower Hunter community to take responsibility for sewer health, but also to provide some light-hearted relief during an incredibly difficult time.

"The word respect is really strong; it helps put ownership back on the individual. We've always been very focused on empowering our community when it comes to our messaging. It is all about empowering the individual to make changes," Ms Fry said.

The National Banksia Sustainability Awards, now in its 34th year, aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are also at the foundation of Hunter Water's organisational objectives. In particular SDG 6 which focuses on 'Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'.

"Respect the Throne aligns with SDG 6 because it's tied to improving water quality and reducing the costs to treat water due to less maintenance and intervention to remove non-biodegradable materials in the treatment process," said Ms Fry.

"Fundamentally it's about supporting and strengthening the participation of our local community to improve water and sanitation management."

The National Banksia Sustainability Awards will be held tonight, Thursday 23 March, at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. For more information on some simple things you can do to prevent sewer problems occurring, visit [www.hunterwater.com.au/respect](http://www.hunterwater.com.au/respect)

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