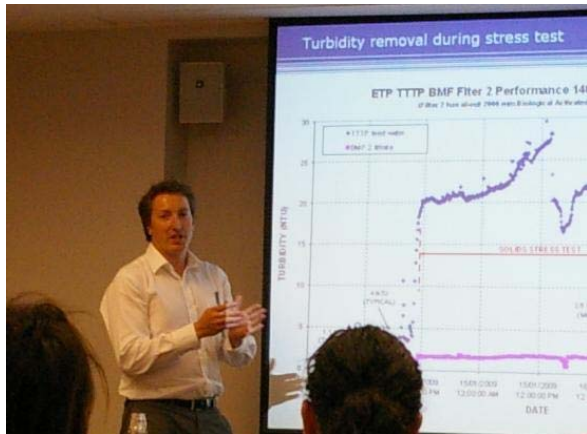


Twelve months of trials - a success

Work on the upgrade from secondary to tertiary sewage treatment is progressing. Results of scientific trials are contributing to decisions about the best type of tertiary treatment at the Plant.

Melbourne Water recently concluded a year of trials of tertiary treatment technologies at the Eastern Treatment Plant. In June 2008, the committee visited the trials building at the plant with Dr Mark Lynch to see some trials in operation. At the committee's February meeting, Chris Williams, Clare McAuliffe and John Mieog from Asset Planning at Melbourne Water presented a summary of the results.



Melbourne Water's John Mieog presents

The team explained the various types of treatment that were tested, and the combinations of processes they're now assessing so they can decide on the preferred method.

Committee member Anne Martin, who started Carrum Indigenous Nursery, says that she's keen to see what happens next.

"I was delighted that the trials went ahead. Our water resources are so precious," Anne commented following the meeting. "I'm an optimist about possibilities, so let's focus our energies on what those possibilities are."

Gidja Walker (Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association representative) says that the tertiary trials have to be part of the bigger picture of caring for our environment. "The trials are a good start — I support them," Gidja remarked. "Now it's about what's done with the results. We need to see our waste as a resource, not something we get rid of. By treating to high quality, the upgrade provides that potential."

Melbourne Water continues to talk with other government agencies about the findings from the trials, to match the processes with a range of requirements. Melbourne Water expects to be in a position in mid 2009 to announce the selected process for tertiary treatment.

What's this about?

Since the Plant opened in 1975, it has been using secondary treatment processes, in accordance with EPA Victoria regulations.

In 2006, the State Government announced that the Plant would be upgraded from secondary to tertiary standard. The upgrade is included in the Victorian Water Plan and it is expected to be complete by the end of 2012.

Tertiary treatment at the Eastern Treatment Plant is intended to improve the marine environment near the South East Outfall, at Boags Rocks, at the south end of Mornington Peninsula.

Tertiary treatment will also result in high quality recycled water with the potential for a wide range of non-drinking uses.

> ourwater.vic.gov.au

How will we be dealing with sewage in 50 years?

The Eastern Treatment Plant is an essential part of Melbourne's sewerage system. A study is looking at how Melbourne will manage human waste in the future.

Recently, the committee heard from City West Water's Owen Phillis. Owen, who is currently working with Melbourne Water, is heading up a team planning for the sewerage needs of the city 50 years from now. "Our work has to take into account what we know, and consider those things that we can't be sure of right now," explains Owen. "We're planning for a city affected by changes in climate, increased growth and differing living standards — it's crucial we prepare for that world now."



Power generators at the Plant can use biogas from the treatment processes. What will sewage treatment look like 50 years from now?

"Our objective is to produce a strategy that fits into the bigger picture — that looks at how we manage our sewage as part of the broader water cycle."

Committee member Pat King is Vice Chair of the Patterson Lakes Village

Committee and went with fellow committee member Les Williams OAM to a session Owen ran about the strategy.

"It was great to hear the amount of preparation going on," says Pat. "When you think about it, we've got more people and more development in and around Melbourne, and that's going to continue. You only have to look around to see we've got more residents locally."

Owen reports that preparation of the strategy is continuing and that Melbourne Water, City West Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water will come together again in the middle of the year to consider its recommendations.

Hey kids!



Looking for info on:

- the Eastern Treatment Plant?
- water or the environment?
- rivers and creeks (and the critters that live in them)?

Take a look at Melbourne Water's new and improved education website. There's heaps of info – you can even take a virtual tour of the Eastern Treatment Plant!

Try it out!

> melbournewater.com.au/education

Spot the bird

Every month since 1998, volunteers from Birds Australia have met at the Eastern Treatment Plant — one of Victoria’s most important waterbird sites — to identify and count the bird life.

Mt Eliza local Mike Carter organises the count (Mike’s also a member of the liaison committee). He says that the standout results from a recent survey included:

- 1 Glossy Ibis
- 19 Yellow-billed Spoonbills
- 3 Common Sandpipers

Mike and his team report that 73 bird species were at the site on that one Sunday alone.

“In these times of drought, the Plant is a very important refuge for our wetland birds” explains Mike. “In fact, it’s one of the most important sites in the state.”

“It’s the permanent water in the treatment lagoons that makes all the difference. We have a large community of birds that rely on this place.

“Fortunately we get great support from Plant management. Their main focus is of course treating the sewage but I appreciate Melbourne Water taking on board my suggestions for helping the birdlife where that is possible.”

Totals from the bird count are sent directly to Melbourne Water’s in-house wildlife and wetland scientists, who use the results in their research and planning.



Mike Carter (left) and fellow volunteers keep watch during a bird count



An image from the poster campaign

Do you know what you shouldn't put down the toilet?

Everything we put down toilets, sinks and drains in homes across Melbourne's east and south east makes its way to the Eastern Treatment Plant.

While most of us use the toilet in the way it was intended, a few people are not sure what we can and can't put down the toilet. To clear up any confusion, Melbourne Water recently launched an awareness campaign to clear things up. The poster campaign uses the slogan 'A Toilet is not a Rubbish Bin' and explains that while 'ones and twos' should go down the toilet, 'threes' should not.

So what are 'threes'?

'Threes' include personal hygiene products, nappies and cotton buds, and anything that has plastic in it. If they reach the sewage treatment

plant, these items have to be removed from the raw sewage before treatment can even start. There are screens and filters at the beginning of the treatment process to take these items out, but there's still a possibility that some items can get through.

> melbournewater.com.au/notarubbishbin

Who we are

The Eastern Treatment Plant Community Liaison Committee started in 1998. The committee is convened by Melbourne Water and meets six times a year, at the Plant. We provide Melbourne Water with advice and community views on the environmental performance and improvement of the Plant and the South East Outfall.

We are residents and representatives of groups with an interest in the area around the plant and the Outfall, and representatives of Melbourne Water, EPA Victoria, other State government agencies, and the Greater Dandenong, Kingston and Frankston city councils.

This newsletter is produced by the Eastern Treatment Plant Community Liaison Committee with assistance from Melbourne Water. We welcome your feedback and any questions.

Contact us

Phone: 131 722
 Email: inquiry@melbournewater.com.au
 Website: melbournewater.com.au/etp

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