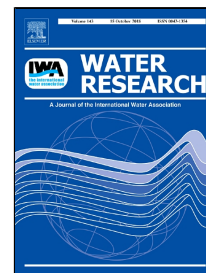


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Contaminants of Emerging Concern as Novel Groundwater Tracers for
Delineating Wastewater Impacts in Urban and Peri-urban Areas



W. McCance, O.A.H. Jones, M. Edwards, A. Surapaneni, S. Chadalavada, M.
Currell

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1 Contaminants of Emerging Concern as Novel Groundwater Tracers 2 for Delineating Wastewater Impacts in Urban and Peri-urban Areas

W. McCance^{1,4}, O.A.H Jones^{2,3}, M. Edwards⁴, A. Surapaneni⁵, S. Chadalavada⁶,
M. Currell^{1,3#}

¹School of Engineering, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC, 3001, Australia

²Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC, 3001, Australia

³Water: Effective Technologies & Tools Research Centre, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC, 3001, Australia

⁴BlueSphere Environmental, 115a Ferrars St, South Melbourne, VIC, 3205, Australia

⁵South East Water, 101 Wells Street, Frankston, VIC, 3199, Australia

⁶Cooperative Research Centre for Contamination Assessment and Remediation of the Environment, ATC Building, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, 2308, Australia

#Corresponding author: E-mail: Matthew.currell@rmit.edu.au; Tel: +61399250402

3 **Abstract**

4 Management and treatment of environmental impacts from wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) is a
5 major, worldwide, sustainability challenge. One issue associated with WWTP operation is the
6 potential for groundwater contamination via leaking or infiltration of wastewater, particularly with
7 inorganic nutrients (ammonia and nitrate) as well as persistent organic compounds. Despite the
8 potential for such contamination to create environmental and health risks, conventional methods, such
9 as the assessment of major ions, nutrients, bacteriological indicators and conventional tracers (such as
10 stable and radiogenic isotopes) are often unable to provide accurate delineation of multiple potential
11 sources of contamination. This is particularly important for WWTPs which often occur in urban, peri-
12 urban or intensively farmed agricultural areas where multiple potential sources (such as livestock,
13 fertilisers, wastewater irrigation, and domestic septic systems) may contribute similar contaminants.
14 This review explores the applicability of promising novel groundwater tracers, such as Contaminants
15 of Emerging Concern (CECs) and isotopic tracers, which can be used in conjunction with
16 conventional tracers (i.e. 'co-tracers') to provide a more definitive assessment of contaminant sources,
17 plume delineation and even (potentially) indicating the age of contamination (e.g., recent vs. legacy).
18 The suitability of the novel groundwater tracers is evaluated according to four key criteria: (i).
19 sufficient presence in raw wastewater and/or treated effluents; (ii) diagnostic of WWTP impacts as
20 opposed to other potential off-site contamination sources; (iii) persistence in the subsurface

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