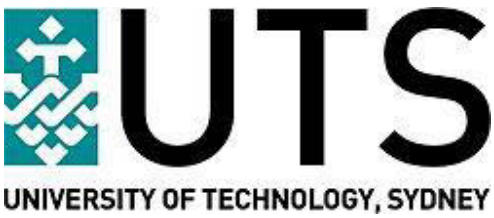
A NOVEL STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT FOR THE NEW END USES OF RECYCLED WATER SCHEMES

By

Zhuo Chen



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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page i

Certificate of original authorship ii

Acknowledgements iii

Table of contents v

List of tables xi

List of figures xiv

Nomenclature xvi

Research outcomes xx

Abstract xxiii

Chapter 1 Introduction 1-1

1.1 Overview 1-2

1.2 Research scope and objectives 1-4

1.3 Thesis structure 1-5

Chapter 2 Literature review 2-1

2.1 Introduction 2-2

2.2 Importance of recycled water 2-2

2.3 Definition and sources of recycled water 2-3

2.3.1 Greywater 2-4

2.3.2 Blackwater 2-4

2.3.3 Municipal wastewater 2-5

2.3.4 Industrial wastewater 2-6

2.4 End uses of recycled water 2-9

2.4.1 Agriculture uses 2-10

2.4.2 Landscape irrigation uses 2-13

2.4.2.1 Golf course uses 2-15

2.4.2.2 Public parks, schools and playgrounds uses 2-16

2.4.2.3 Residential landscape uses 2-16

2.4.3 Industrial uses 2-17

2.4.3.1 Cooling water 2-18

2.4.3.2 Boiler feed water 2-19
2.4.3.3 Industrial process water 2-20
2.4.4 Environmental and recreational Uses 2-25
2.4.5 Non-potable urban and residential Uses 2-26
2.4.6 Groundwater recharges 2-28
2.4.7 Indirect potable reuses (IPR) and direct potable reuses (DPR) 2-30
2.5 Assessment models on recycled water schemes 2-32
2.5.1 Material Flow Analysis (MFA) models 2-33
2.5.1.1 Application of MFA models on environmental sanitation improvement 2-34
2.5.1.2 Characteristics and weaknesses of MFA models on water reuse 2-37
2.5.2 Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) models 2-38
2.5.2.1 Agricultural uses 2-39
2.5.2.2 Industrial uses 2-41
2.5.2.3 Characteristics and weaknesses of LCA models 2-43
2.5.3 Risk Assessment (RA) models 2-44
2.5.3.1 Qualitative RA models 2-45
2.5.3.2 Quantitative HRA models 2-49
2.5.3.3 Quantitative ERA models 2-67
2.5.3.4 Characteristics and weaknesses of RA models on water reuse 2-73
2.5.3.5 Risk control on recycled water 2-74
2.5.4 Integrated assessment models 2-77
2.5.4.1 MFA coupled with LCA models 2-79
2.5.4.2 LCA coupled with ERA models 2-80
2.5.4.3 Comprehensive decision making 2-81
2.6 Conclusions 2-85

Chapter 3 Research methodology 3-1
3.1 Introduction 3-2
3.2 Comprehensive assessment analysis on new end uses of recycled water 3-2
3.2.1 Significance of the research 3-2
3.2.2 Evaluation framework and execution procedure 3-3
3.2.3 Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) in decision making 3-6

3.2.3.1 Multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT) 3-6
3.2.3.2 Preference ranking organization method for enrichment evaluation (PROMETHEE) 3-9
3.3 Social survey analysis on the new end uses of recycled water 3-12
3.3.1 Chi-square test 3-12
3.3.2 Regression model 3-13
3.4 Experimental analysis of the new optional recycled water purification system 3-14
3.4.1 Feed solution 3-14
3.4.2 Pre-conditioning of natural zeolites 3-14
3.4.3 Experimental set-up 3-15
3.4.4 Zeolite regeneration with sodium chloride solution 3-17
3.4.5 Analytical techniques 3-18
3.4.5.1 pH 3-18
3.4.5.2 Alkalinity 3-18
3.4.5.3 Nutrient analysis 3-19
3.4.5.4 Turbidity analysis 3-20
3.4.5.5 Scanning electron microscope (SEM) analysis 3-20
3.4.5.6 Energy disperses X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) analysis 3-21
3.4.5.7 Hardness analysis 3-22

Chapter 4 Conceptual principle and assessment for analysis of new end uses in recycled water schemes 4-1
4.1 Introduction 4-2
4.2 Research background 4-2
4.3 Identification of potentials for the development of recycled water new end uses 4-4
4.3.1 Use of recycled water for the household laundry 4-4
4.3.2 Use of recycled water for livestock feeding and servicing 4-6
4.3.3 Use of recycled water for swimming pools 4-9
4.4 Assessment analysis 4-12
4.4.1 Qualitative feasibility analysis 4-12
4.4.2 Quantitative analysis for prioritization of management options 4-14
4.4.2.1 Management options 4-14

4.4.2.2 Evaluation criteria 4-17
4.4.2.3 Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) in decision making 4-19
4.4.3 Decision making plan 4-21
4.5 Conclusions 4-21

Chapter 5 Multi-criteria analysis towards the new end use of recycled water schemes for a household laundry: a case study in Sydney 5-1
5.1 Introduction 5-2
5.2 Water recycling situations in Sydney 5-2
5.2.1 Agricultural and landscape irrigation uses 5-3
5.2.2 Residential uses 5-4
5.2.3 Industrial uses 5-6
5.2.4 Environmental uses 5-7
5.3 Management alternatives and evaluation criteria 5-8
5.3.1 Possible recycled water end use options 5-9
5.3.2 Recycled water use in a household laundry 5-10
5.3.2.1 Baseline scenario (do nothing scenario) 5-11
5.3.2.2 Recycled water for existing washing machines 5-11
5.3.2.3 Recycled water coupled with new washing machines 5-12
5.4 Case study 5-14
5.4.1 Analysis of three possible recycled water end use options 5-15
5.4.2 Analysis of five management alternatives for recycled water use in household laundry 5-18
5.4.2.1 Quantification of management alternatives 5-18
5.4.2.2 Elicitation of weights 5-21
5.4.2.3 PROMETHEE MCA results 5-22
5.4.3 Possible improvements on MCA decision making in future research 5-23
5.5 Conclusions 5-24

Chapter 6 Analysis of social attitude for the new end uses in recycled water schemes 6-1
6.1 Introduction 6-2
6.2 Research background 6-2

6.2.1 Current recycled water use situations in Australia 6-2
6.2.2 Survey locations 6-4
6.2.3 Questionnaire structure 6-7
6.3 General features of laundry behaviour and willingness to use recycled water 6-10
6.3.1 Household laundry behaviours in three survey locations 6-10
6.3.2 Willingness to use recycled water 6-11
6.3.3 Preferred ways to receive relevant information 6-12
6.4 Influential factors on the public attitudes of future users toward recycled water use in a laundry 6-13
6.4.1 Attitude of future users on receiving recycled water supply 6-13
6.4.2 Regression Model 1 and Model 2 6-15
6.4.3 Regression Model 3 6-19
6.5 Feedback from current users on using recycled water 6-21
6.6 Conclusions 6-22

Chapter 7 A new optional recycled water purification system prior to use in the household laundry 7-1
7.1 Introduction 7-2
7.2 Research background 7-2
7.2.1 Recycled water quality 7-3
7.2.2 Hardness of recycled water 7-5
7.2.3 Potential application of natural zeolites for water softening 7-6
7.3 Zeolite pretreatment unit for recycled water purification 7-7
7.3.1 Characterization of zeolite samples 7-8
7.3.2 Optimal contact time and maximum operation capacity 7-10
7.3.2.1 Optimal contact time 7-10
7.3.2.2 Maximum operation capacity (MOC) 7-12
7.3.3 Zeolite column service life and breakthrough capacity 7-14
7.3.3.1 Laundry use frequency and water consumption in a typical household 7-14
7.3.3.2 Mass balance of the pre-treatment system 7-15
7.3.3.3 Calculation of zeolite column service life 7-16
7.3.3.4 Breakthrough capacity (BC) 7-17

7.3.4 Zeolite column regeneration 7-17
7.3.5 Pilot-scale column design and considerations 7-18
7.4 Conclusions 7-19

Chapter 8 Conclusions and recommendations 8-1
8.1 Introduction 8-2
8.1.1 Special findings 8-2
8.1.2 Final conclusions 8-6
8.2 Recommendations 8-7

References R-1
Appendix A-1

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 The characteristics of major wastewaters and associated treatment methods 2-8

Table 2.2 Historical recycled water use restrictions and guidelines in agriculture (modified from Kretschmer et al., 2004; Asano et al., 2007; Bitton, 2011) 2-11

Table 2.3 Landscape irrigation categories (adapted from Asano et al., 2007) 2-14

Table 2.4 Water reuse guidelines for wastewater reuse around the world (modified from Lazarova and Bahri, 2004; Pidou, 2006; Asano et al., 2007) 2-14

Table 2.5 Comparison of recycled water quality in Kembla Steelworks and guidelines (modified from Hird, 2006) 2-23

Table 2.6 Comparison of treatment processes in old and new Goreangab WRT (modified from du Pisani, 2006) 2-32

Table 2.7 Optimal treatment technologies associated with different end use categories (modified from Vlasopoulos et al., 2006) 2-41

Table 2.8 Qualitative risk matrix (adapted from NRMMC-EPHC-AHMC, 2008) 2-45

Table 2.9 Exposure risk levels (adapted from GWA, 2009b) 2-46

Table 2.10 Rapid risk assessment on recycled water (adapted from Derry et al., 2006) 2-47

Table 2.11 Qualitative microbial risk assessment for water reuse scenarios (modified from Roser et al., 2006) 2-48

Table 2.12 Dose-response models from various enteric pathogen ingestion studies (modified from Asano et al., 2007; Soller et al., 2010b) 2-56

Table 2.13 Median number of yearly infections resulting from different exposure scenarios (adapted from Westrell et al., 2004) 2-59

Table 2.14 Static MRA models for different end uses 2-60

Table 2.15 Characteristics of deterministic and stochastic models (modified from Koopman et al., 2002; Soller et al., 2003) 2-63

Table 2.16 Stochastic models for risk assessment on recycled water applications 2-66

Table 2.17 Hospital wastewater treatment scenarios and associated PEC calculations 2-72

Table 2.18 Restrictions and effects on crops and public access (modified from Kamizoulis, 2008) 2-76
Table 2.19 Internal costs of several recycled water schemes in Australia (modified from Radcliffe, 2008; Wang, 2011) 2-83
Table 3.1 The qualitative scoring system (adapted from Coutts, 2006) 3-7
Table 3.2 Preference functions used in PROMETHEE (modified from Brans and Mareschal, (2005) 3-11
Table 3.3 Chemical composition of Castle Mountain Zeolites (adapted from An et al., 2011; CMZ, 2013) 3-14
Table 4.1 Household laundry behaviour in different locations (modified from Pakula and Stamminger, 2010; ABS, 2011) 4-5
Table 4.2 Drinking water and service water requirements for livestock (modified from Attwood, 1997; Chapagain and Hoekstra, 2003; FAO, 2006; Markwick, 2007; Dennis, 2008) 4-8
Table 4.3 Risk management for backwash water reuse (adapted from Sydney Water, 2011) 4-11
Table 4.4 Qualitative feasibility analysis of proposed new end uses of recycled water 4-13
Table 5.1 Descriptions of three possible recycled water management options (modified from Spaninks, 2000; Cooper, 2003; Pham et al., 2011; Sydney Water, 2011) 5-10
Table 5.2 Washing machine efficiency comparisons (adapted from WELS, 2012) 5-13
Table 5.3 Descriptions of evaluation criteria 5-14
Table 5.4 Summary of key and sub-criteria and weightings 5-16
Table 5.5 Performances of the management options on each criterion 5-18
Table 5.6 Characteristics of recycled water quality produced by different treatment processes (modified from Cooper, 2003; Kim et al., 2009) 5-20
Table 6.1 Respondents' attitudes to receiving recycled water in two survey locations 6-14
Table 6.2 Factors found to influence community acceptance of recycled water in a laundry 6-17
Table 6.3 Logistic regression for recycled water 6-18
Table 7.1 Performance measure for chemical characteristics 7-3

Table 7.2 Performance measure for water quality indicators 7-5

Table 7.3 Chemical element compositions of the natural zeolites under raw material, pre-conditioning and adsorption completion conditions by EDS 7-10

Table 7.4 Ideal exchange capacity of some natural zeolites (adapted from Inglezakis, 2005) 7-13

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Recycled water end uses (modified from Dolničar and Schäfer, 2009; Asano, 2001; Bitton, 2011) 2-9

Figure 2.2 Simplified centralised dual pipe system in residential areas 2-27

Figure 2.3 Simplified systems representing nitrogen flows in the current (a) and improved (b) sanitation system in urban areas in Vietnam (adapted from Agnes et al., 2007) 2-34

Figure 2.4 Metabolism of water in the socio-economy of a region (adapted from Schneider et al., 2002) 2-35

Figure 2.5 System boundary of LCA study on Rouse Hill water recycling scheme (modified from Tangsubkul et al., 2005b) 2-40

Figure 2.6 Risk assessment matrix of IPR schemes (adapted from Dominguez-Chicas and Scrimshaw, 2010) 2-49

Figure 2.7 Quantitative risk assessment process 2-50

Figure 2.8 Dose-response curve (modified from Asano et al., 2007) 2-52

Figure 2.9 Disease transmission model for a dynamic risk assessment (adapted from Soller et al., 2010a) 2-62

Figure 2.10 Steps in performing ERA (modified from Bartell, 2008) 2-68

Figure 2.11 Possible critical control points of a water recycling system (modified from Huertas et al., 2008) 2-75

Figure 2.12 Simplified diagram of the ORWARE methodology (adapted from Ramírez et al., 2002) 2-79

Figure 2.13 Outline of the comprehensive decision making for recycled water schemes 2-81

Figure 2.14 The hypothesised model in predicting community behaviour (adapted from Po et al., 2005) 2-84

Figure 3.1 Systematic data collection for recycled water planning and sustainability management (modified from Agnes et al., 2007) 3-3

Figure 3.2 Proposed framework for decision making in new end use management 3-4

Figure 3.3 Schematic diagram of the pre-treatment unit 3-16

Figure 3.4 Zeolite column experiment in the laboratory 3-16

Figure 3.5 HANNA pH meter, HI 9125 (adapted from HANNA Instruments, 2013) 3-18

Figure 3.6 HANNA total titratable low to high alkalinity titrator, HI 84431 (adapted from HANNA Instruments, 2013) 3-19
Figure 3.7 NOVA 60, Merck spectrophotometer 3-19
Figure 3.8 HACH 2100Q, portable turbidimeter (adapted from CHEM17, 2013) 3-20
Figure 3.9 Zeiss EVO® LS 15 analytical environmental SEM (adapted from ZEISS, 2013) 3-21
Figure 3.10 Bruker XFlash® EDS Detector for SEM (adapted from Bruker, 2013) 3-21
Figure 3.11 HANNA Hardness Ion Specific Meter, HI 93735 (adapted from HANNA Instruments, 2013) 3-22
Figure 4.1 Water consumption on livestock farming activities in Australia by different origins of water (modified from ABS, 2012) 4-6
Figure 4.2 Water use breakdown of a typical aquatic centre (modified from Sydney Water, 2011) 4-10
Figure 5.1 A sensitivity analysis of the three management options 5-17
Figure 5.2 The designed user menu interface using MATLAB 5-21
Figure 5.3 Most preferred alternative at all possible weight combinations 5-23
Figure 6.1 Geographical locations of the survey areas in Port Macquarie, Melbourne and Sydney, Australia (modified from Google Map, 2013; The Lost Seed, 2013) 6-5
Figure 6.2 Laundry behaviours of respondents in the three survey locations 6-10
Figure 6.3 Respondents' willingness to use recycled water on various options in Port Macquarie and Melbourne 6-11
Figure 6.4 Responses to the preferred ways to receive additional information on recycled water 6-12
Figure 6.5 Extent of the variable effect in Model 3 on the final acceptance of recycled water use in a laundry 6-19
Figure 7.1 SEM images of the raw natural zeolite (a) and after pre-conditioning (b) 7-8
Figure 7.2 SEM image of the zeolite after the column reached saturation 7-9
Figure 7.3 Breakthrough curves for recycled water softening process with different contact times 7-11
Figure 7.4 Schematic diagram of water flows in the zeolite pre-treatment system 7-15
Figure 7.5 Breakthrough curves for recycled water softening process under the contact time of 5 minutes with successive regenerations 7-18

NOMENCLATURE

AAS	atomic adsorption spectrophotometer
ABS	absorbents
AC	activated carbon
ADWG	Australia drinking water guideline
AOP	advanced oxidation process
AP	acidification potential
BC	breakthrough capacity
BOD	biochemical oxygen demand
BN	Bayesian network
BV/h	bed volumes per hour
CAS	conventional activated sludge
CBD	central business district
COD	chemical oxygen demand
COEF	coefficient
CSF	cancer slope factor
CW	constructed wetland
CWW	city west water
DAF	dissolved air flotation
DALY	disability adjusted life years
DBP	disinfection by-products
DMF	dual media filtration
DPR	direct potable reuses
ECOSAR	ecological structure activity relationship
EDCs	endocrine disrupting compounds
EDS	energy disperses X-ray spectroscopy
EIO	economic input-output
ELECTRE	elimination and choice expressing reality
EP	eutrophication potential
EPA	environmental protection agency
ERA	environmental risk assessment
ETP	ecotoxicity potential
FC	faecal coliform

GAC	granular activated carbon
GC	gas chromatography
GHG	greenhouse gas
GL	gigalitres
GL/d	gigalitres per day
GL/yr	gigalitres per year
GWP	global warming potential
GWR	groundwater replenishment
HACCP	hazard analysis critical control point
HQ	hazard quotient
HRA	health risk assessment
HRT	hydraulic retention time
ICP	inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectroscopy
ION	ion exchange
IPR	indirect potable reuses
kWh/d	kilowatt-hour per day
L	litre
LC	liquid chromatography
LCA	life cycle analysis
LCI	life cycle inventory
LCIA	life cycle impact assessment
LOAEL	lowest dose at which adverse effects are observed
L/p/d	litres per capita per day
MAUT	multi-attribute utility theory
MBR	membrane bioreactor
MCA	multi-criteria analysis
MF	microfiltration
MFA	material flow analysis
mg/g	milligram per gram
mg/L	milligram per litre
MIET	missing inventory estimation tool
ML	megalitre
ML/d	megalitres per day
ML/yr	megalitre per year

MOC	maximum operation capacity
MRA	microbial risk assessment
MS	mass spectrometry
MVC	mechanical vapour compression
NF	nanofiltration
NOAEL	highest dose at which no adverse effects are observed
NSW	New South Wales
OCWD	Orange County water district
ODP	ozone depletion potential
OR	odds ratio
ORG	organoclay
ORP	oxidation reduction potential
ORWARE	organic waste research model
PAC	powdered activated carbon
PEC	predicted environmental concentration
PHO	photochemical oxidation
PMHC	Port Macquarie-Hastings council
PNEC	predicted no effect concentration
PROMETHEE	preference ranking organization method for enrichment evaluation
QCRA	quantitative chemical risk assessment
QLD	Queensland
QMRA	quantitative microbial risk assessment
RA	risk assessment
RBC	rotating biological reactor
RC	residual chlorine
RfD	safe risk level
RHDA	Rouse Hill development area
RHWRS	Rouse Hill water recycling scheme
RIRA	recycled water irrigation risk analysis
RO	reverse osmosis
ROWG	rank order weight generation
RQ	risk quotients
RW	recycled water
RWAlterDW	recycled water is an alternative to drinking water

PhACs	pharmaceutical active compounds
SA	South Australia
SAT	soil aquifer treatment
SBR	sequencing batch reactor
SE	standard error
SEM	scanning electron microscope
SP	salinisation potential
SPSS	statistical package for the social sciences
STP	sewage treatment plant
SWC	Sydney Water corporation
TC	total coliform
TDS	total dissolved solids
TN	total nitrogen
TOC	total organic carbon
TP	total phosphorus
TSS	total suspended solids
UF	ultrafiltration
UV	ultraviolet
VIC	Victoria
VOC	volatile organic compounds
WCRWP	Western Corridor recycled water project
WHO	world health organization
WM	washing machines
WRAMS	water reclamation and management scheme
WRP	water reclamation plant
WSP	waste stabilization pond
WWTP	wastewater treatment plant

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

(9 journal papers, 4 conference papers and 7 research awards)

Journal Articles

1. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S., Pham, T. T. N., Lim, R., Wang, X. C., et al. (2014). A new optional recycled water pre-treatment system prior to use in the household laundry. *Science of the Total Environment*, 476, 513-521.

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3. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S., Wang, X. C., Miechel, C., Corby, N., et al. (2013). Analysis of social attitude to the new end use of recycled water for household laundry by the regression models. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 126, 79-84.

4. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H. and Guo, W. S. (2013). Risk control in recycled water schemes. *Critical reviews in Environmental Science and Technology*, 43(22), 2439-2510.

5. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H. and Guo, W. S. (2013). A critical review on the end uses of recycled water. *Critical reviews in Environmental Science and Technology*, 43(14), 1446-1516.

6. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S. and Wang, X. C. (2013). Analysis of Sydney's recycled water schemes. *Frontiers of Environmental Science and Engineering,* 7(4), 608-615.

7. **Chen Z.**, Ngo H. H., Guo W. S., Listowski, A., O'Halloran, K., Thompson, M., et al. (2012). Multi-criteria analysis towards the new end use of recycled water for

household laundry: A case study in Sydney. *Science of the Total Environment*, 438(1), 59-65.

8. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H. and Guo, W. S. (2012). A critical review on sustainability assessment of recycled water schemes. *Science of the Total Environment*, 426(1), 13-31.

9. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S., Wang, X. C. and Luo, L. (2011). Probabilistic risk assessment of recycled water schemes in Australia using MATLAB toolbox. *Journal of Water Sustainability*, 1(3), 75-86.

Conference Papers

1. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S. (2013). Conceptual principle for development of new end uses in recycled water schemes. Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium "Re-Water Braunschweig", November 6-7, 2013, Braunschweig, Germany. p. 27-34.

2. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S., Listowski, A., O' Halloran, K., Thompson, M. and Muthukaruppan, M. (2012). Multi-criteria analysis of Sydney's recycled water schemes towards the new end use for washing machines, Poster presentation, *IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition*, Busan, Korea, 16-21 September, 2012.

3. **Chen Z.**, Ngo H. H., Guo W. S. and Wang X. C. (2011). Analysis of Sydney's recycled water schemes. Oral presentation at the IWA Conference-*Cities of the Future Xi'an: Technologies for integrated urban water management*, China, 15-19 September, 2011.

4. **Chen, Z.**, Ngo, H. H., Guo, W. S., Wang, X. C. and Luo, L. (2011). Probabilistic risk assessment of recycled water schemes in Australia using MATLAB toolbox. Oral presentation at the *International Conference on Challenges in Environmental Science and Engineering (CESE)*, Tainan, Taiwan, 25-30 September, 2011.

Research awards

1. Excellence in Professional Development Program in Civil & Environmental Engineering Research, CTWW, UTS 07/2011−12/2013

2. Finalist at the 2013 UTS final 3 Minutes Thesis Competition 08/2013

3. Best oral presentation award at the UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) 3 Minutes Thesis Competition 08/2013

4. Best oral presentation award at the UTS FEIT Research Showcase Contest 06/2013

5. Best poster presentation award at the International Water Association (IWA) World Water Congress and Exhibition, Busan, Korea, 16-21 September, 2012 09/2012

6. Best student oral presentation award at the International Conference on Challenges in Environment Science & Engineering, Taiwan, 25-30 September, 2011 09/2011

7. University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) International Research Scholarship 01/2011−12/2013

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, recycled water has provided sufficient flexibility to satisfy short-term freshwater needs and increase the reliability of long-term water supplies in many water scarce areas. It becomes an essential component of integrated water resources management. However, the current applications of recycled water are still quite limited with non-potable purposes such as irrigation, industrial uses, toilet flushing, car washing and environmental flows. There is a potential to exploit and develop new end uses of recycled water in both urban and rural areas. This can contribute largely to freshwater savings, wastewater reduction and water sustainability.

This thesis put forwards a conceptual decision making framework for the systematic feasibility assessment of sustainable water management strategies in related to new end uses of recycled water's planning, establishment and implementation. Due to the transparency, objectivity and comprehensiveness, the analytic framework can facilitate the optional management strategy selection process within a larger context of the community, processes, and models in recycled water decision-making. Based on that, a simplified quantitative Multi-criteria Analysis (MCA) was conducted in Rouse Hill Development Area (RHDA), Sydney, Australia, using the Multi-attribute Utility Theory (MAUT) technique. The results indicated that recycled water for a household laundry was the optimum solution which best satisfied the overall evaluation criteria. Another two management options can be excluded from further consideration in initial stages, namely the implementation of Level 1 water restriction on the use of recycled water and recycled water for swimming pools.

With the identified strengths of recycled water use in washing machines, five relevant management alternatives were proposed according to different recycled water treatment technologies such as microfiltration (MF), granular activated carbon (GAC) or reverse osmosis (RO), and types of washing machines (WMs). Accordingly, a comprehensive quantitative assessment on the trade-off among a variety of issues (e.g., technical, risk, social, environmental and economic aspects) was performed over the alternatives. Overall, the MF treated recycled water coupled with new washing machines and the MF-GAC treated recycled water coupled with existing washing machines were shown

to be preferred options. The results could provide a powerful guidance for sustainable water reuse in the long term. However, more detailed field trials and investigations are still needed to understand, predict and manage the impact of selected recycled water new end use alternatives effectively.

Notably, public acceptability becomes important to ensure the successful development of recycled water new application in household laundries. This thesis addresses social issues by extensive social attitude surveys conducted in three locations of Australia, namely Port Macquarie, Melbourne and Sydney. Based on responses from Port Macquarie and Melbourne, the regression models provide conclusions about which characteristics are more likely to lead to the acceptance of recycled water from society. Three attitudinal variables (i.e., recycled water is an alternative to drinking water, attitude and cost) and three psychological variables (i.e., odour, reading and a small treatment unit) were found to be the key driving forces behind domestic water reuse behaviour. Comparatively, survey results in Sydney indicated slightly different aspects of concern. Due to experience in current use on dual pipe systems, Sydney residents interviewed have established good cognitions on the appearance and cost of recycled water. They were more concerned about the colour of clothes and potential damage to washing machines. The overall findings could drive future research to achieve a better public perception of the new end uses of recycled water.

Moreover, the thesis also demonstrates the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of applying a zeolite filtration column as an effective ion-exchange resin for recycled water softening prior to use in washing machines. At the laboratory scale, the column service life for a typical washing machine was approximately one month without material regeneration on the basis of an optimal contact time (i.e., 5 minutes) and the calculated breakthrough capacity (i.e., 14 milligram hardness ions per gram of zeolites). It is believed that with a full application at households, this unit is likely to play a positive role in guaranteeing the recycled water quality as well as changing the public perception on the safe use of recycled water.