

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM



TO: Pesticide Watch participants

Plain Language Statement

Date: 1st April, 2024 – 31st March, 2025

Full Project Title: Pesticide profiling of Australian streams using citizen science

Principal Researcher: A/Prof. Damien Callahan

Student Researcher: Brady Hamilton

Associate Researcher(s): A/Prof. Julie Mondon

- **How you were contacted**

Thank you for responding to the advertisement for the 2024 Pesticide Watch program and registering your interest with Deakin University.

- **The research question**

This community science research program seeks to monitor and understand factors affecting pesticide residues in Australian waterways across different seasons.

- **Purpose**

Its purpose is to measure the current extent of pesticide pollution in Australian streams and use this to estimate the current environmental risk posed by pesticides to these aquatic ecosystems. It is also significant that this program is embedded in community water quality monitoring, allowing for engagement and educational opportunities for the participants involved.

- **Methods**

We will gather some details about each sampling site nominated for the study. These will include their location, other tests you may conduct there, and what type of land use is most common around your site. Sampling kits will be sent out for collection in your area, which contain all necessary equipment for the collection of monthly sample for a period of 9 months using our specified protocol below:

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Monthly sampling protocol:

- Rinse a bucket or other plastic collection container by lowering it into the stream, then emptying it. Repeat this rinsing of the container 3 times. Now collect some stream water.
- Rinse the syringe by filling it with the collected water and then discharging the water onto the ground nearby. Repeat this 2 more times.
- Fill a full syringe with collected water then screw the syringe filter onto the leuc lock on the syringe.
- Prime the syringe filter by discharging approximately 1 mL of river water through it (do not collect this water)
- Discharge between 35-40 mL of filtered river water into a collection tube. If more water is needed, detach the syringe filter to aspirate more water before reattaching it to collect the sample.
- Label the samples with the date and site code provided
eg. GAR901, 24/6/2023
- Freeze the samples when collection is complete.

Reply-paid envelopes are included in the kits, which can be used to return the samples to Deakin University in Burwood. Here, the samples will be screened for several hundred pesticides, forming a large database which can provide insights into pesticide pollution in waterways nationally.

- **What your participation will involve**

As part of the sign-up process, you will be asked to complete a survey which asks for your contact details, sampling site details, and which other water quality data you collect each month. You will then be sent a sampling kit and will begin monthly sample collection alongside your group's regular monthly water quality monitoring. Once three samples are collected and frozen, they should be mailed to Deakin using the reply-paid envelopes included in the kit. You will repeat this for the remaining monthly samples until the end of the program. Following our lab work and data analysis at Deakin, a summary of our results will be prepared for all participants.

- **Risks and potential benefits to participants**

Risks posed from participation in this study are minimal, and participation is entirely voluntary. If at any time you feel uncomfortable providing details in the survey, please contact us at the email address provided. The sampling protocol itself does not present any significant risks beyond those already associated with your monthly water quality monitoring activities – you will simply filter some of your collected water using our equipment. The potential benefits to your group will be a deeper

understanding of your waterway health and a greater insight into pesticide pollution of aquatic ecosystems as a national environmental issue.

- **Expected benefits to the wider community**

Pesticide pollution has been recognised as a significant global environmental issue for decades, and concern continues to increase over time. However, pesticide use is nearly ubiquitous in food production as well as many other settings – it is an issue which is deeply woven into our lives. Pesticide Watch is an innovation project which is among the first to engage with the community in understanding the extent of and environmental risk posed by these chemicals. This information can be used to better respond to pesticide pollution in areas of high risk.

- **How privacy and confidentiality will be protected**

The personal details that you provide in our survey will be stored securely on the Deakin Research Data Share via our network drive for a period of 5 years. Any data analysis that is conducted will not require your contact details, so will be processed only with your site code. This minimises the risk that your details will be used for any purposes without your consent.

- **How the research will be monitored**

Research will be monitored with frequent, regular meetings between research supervisors, catchment authorities, and other monitoring organisations helping to facilitate Pesticide Watch. Participation will be monitored by an inventory of the samples that we receive from each site.

- **Participation and withdrawal**

Participation in this program is entirely voluntary and is an opt-in addition offered to existing water quality monitoring groups. Once you have chosen to complete the survey, you will be considered a participant in the program. However, you reserve the right to withdraw at any time by contacting us at the email address provided.

- **Dissemination of the research findings, including publication**

A summary of research findings will be prepared and distributed online to all participants at the conclusion of the program. We will also seek to publish our results in academic journals and may discuss them in the media, as well as present them at conferences.

- **How the data will be managed and stored, including the relevant data retention period** (see the [Deakin Research Data and Primary Materials Management procedure](#)).

Data will be stored on the secure Deakin Research Data Share for a period of 5 years.

- **How data will be shared**

The samples that you collect and the data generated from this study may be used in future studies similar to this one. For example, your stored freshwater samples may be analysed for other contaminants such as heavy metals in the future. Participation in this project requires your extended consent for such future studies to be undertaken within the area of environmental contamination.

- **Contact details of the researchers**

Brady Hamilton

Email: brady.hamilton@deakin.edu.au

A/Prof. Damien Callahan

Email: damien.callahan@deakin.edu.au

A/Prof. Julie Mondon

Email: julie.mondon@deakin.edu.au

- The complaints clause listed below:

Complaints

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number [\[201X-XXX\]](#).



PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: **Pesticide Watch participants**

Consent Form

Date:

Full Project Title: Pesticide profiling of Australian streams using citizen science

Reference Number:

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

I consent to the samples I collect for this project being used for possible future research in the area of environmental contamination.

I understand that my contact information collected for this project and the resulting data will be stored securely for a period of 5 years.

Participant's Name (printed)

Signature Date

Please return this completed form to Brady Hamilton at brady.hamilton@deakin.edu.au. Upon completion, you will be sent a Qualtrics survey to complete your registration for Pesticide Watch.



PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: Pesticide Watch participants

Withdrawal of Consent Form

(To be used for participants who wish to withdraw from the project)

Date:

Full Project Title: Pesticide profiling of freshwater streams using citizen science

Reference Number:

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University **[and add other organisations where applicable]**.

Participant's Name (printed)

Signature Date

Please post or email this form to:

Brady Hamilton
Deakin University Burwood Campus
221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood VIC
3125
brady.hamilton@deakin.edu.au

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