

WRC at the forefront of emerging contaminants research

Despite considerable progress in water research undertaken over the past decade, there is increasing concern over the presence of the so called “emerging contaminants” (ECs) in the environment as well as their potential human health risks. The Water Research Commission (WRC) has realised that more needs to be done in order to understand, assess and manage the risks associated with emerging contaminants in the environment, to advance the science, as well as to communicate with the authorities and the public. The Commission, together with stakeholders in the water sector, met earlier this year to discuss the issue at length and share new research developments, as well as formulate a research strategy on how to tackle the problem in hand in order to improve our understanding on the full potential human and ecosystem health effects of these contaminants in our water resources. All stakeholders were in agreement that more needs to be done on this issue, particularly towards hazardous waste collections and more should be done to raise awareness among consumers on the proper disposal of pharmaceutical products, in order to safeguard against the entry of these contaminants into our water systems.



WRC CEO, Dhesigen Naidoo, emphasised the importance of engaging in such talks as a transformation of the current water treatment system through technology is fast growing.



Delegates at the dialogue.



Leanne Coetzee presented information on the latest research funded by the WRC on persistent organic pollutants and contaminants of emerging concern.



Prof Henk Bouwman of North-West University noted that increasingly, emerging contaminants were being detected at various concentrations in the environment.



The special guest speaker at the event was Dr Audrey Levine, a Fulbright Fellow and Programme Director at the National Research Council, in the USA.