





22nd International

# RIVER SYMPOSIUM

20-24 OCT 2019 | BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA



# Thank you

The 22<sup>nd</sup> International *Riversymposium* was an opportunity for everyone involved in river management to share their knowledge, be inspired, learn, network and enhance skills to restore, protect and enable resilience - all while enjoying Australia's stunning river city.

**And you, our passionate partners and donors, helped make the *Riversymposium* a success!**

We are proud of the longevity and commitment of the *Riversymposium*'s long-time Platinum Partner, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Gold Partner, Brisbane City Council (BCC). Thank you for your continued enthusiasm in the symposium and for recognising the positive impact the event has on its attendees. You are the enablers of this event.

This year, we also welcomed back the support of Healthy Land and Water and the Queensland Government as Gold Sponsors, and Griffith University as research sponsor. Thank you for your invaluable local knowledge and international network that added significantly to our program.

Our Diversity in Water event sponsored by the Australian Water Partnership was a successful event and a great way to start the symposium this year.

To the sponsors of the Learn-Inspire-Transform sessions, thank you for your support for these interactive sessions. The feedback confirmed that these sessions, which we initiated in Sydney last year, will continue in the future symposiums.

In line with the theme, we launched the International Resilient Rivers Blueprint - we are grateful to our founding partners for joining us on this journey to achieve resilience of our rivers in light of global change.

To the partners of this year's new and invigorated *RiverExpo*, thank you for showcasing your commitment to addressing the complex challenges that our rivers, catchments and communities are facing globally.

Building, nurturing and showcasing *RiverLeaders*, one of the International RiverFoundation's platforms, was showcased through our High-Level Delegates and Emerging Water Professionals programs sponsored by DFAT and the Australian Water Partnership (AWP), as well as our inaugural Clem Jones Fellows sponsored by the Clem Jones Foundation. Preceding the symposium, we also launched the inaugural members of our *RiverPatrons* Group, with the Brisbane City Lord Mayor as our first patron.

This year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International *Riverprize*. We acknowledge the Bert and Vera Thiess Foundation for its continued support - without which we would not be able to deliver the world's most prestigious prize for excellence in river basin management.

And to our ever-growing global group of dedicated volunteers: members of our Strategic Planning and Organising Committees, International *Riverprize* Judges, session chairs and onsite event volunteers - we thank you all wholeheartedly for your contribution.

**On behalf of the IRF Board and staff, thank you! We look forward to meeting you all during the 23<sup>rd</sup> International *Riversymposium*.**



**Dr Eva Abal**

CEO, International RiverFoundation

# Contents

FAST FACTS	4
WHAT IS RIVERSYMPIUM?	5
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS	6
MESSAGES FROM OUR KEYNOTES	7
LEARNING-INSPIRING -TRANSFORMING	9
CELEBRATION	10
RIVEREXPO	12
WHO ATTENDED?	13
GLOBAL OUTREACH AND INFLUENCE	14
TESTIMONIALS	15
OUR PARTNERS	16
MAKING IT HAPPEN	17
OUR RIVERPATRONS	17
THE IRS JOURNEY	18

# FAST FACTS

**539**

Delegates

**39**

Countries

**5**

Days

**1**

Riverprize

**49**

Emerging Water  
Professionals Program  
Participants

**12**

High Level  
Delegates

**6**

Keynote  
Speakers

**14**

Learn-Inspire-Transform  
Sessions

**3**

Study Tours

# What is Riversymposium?

International Riversymposium is the pre-eminent international river conference linking business to science, policy and communities.



## RIVERSYMPOSIUM OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Celebrate best practice and the 'knowledge portal'
- ✓ Create a global network of experts and practitioners
- ✓ Address river and catchment issues in urban and rural settings
- ✓ Facilitate business opportunities related to river management
- ✓ Be a catalyst of reform in policy and practice

**Uniting river managers globally. Developing the business of water and river management. Designed to leverage the export of knowledge and best practices in water management to the world.**

We connect companies, communities and individuals, providing the expertise, opportunity and support to be part of the solution, and to establish an enduring legacy through a holistic approach to water and river management.

## SPONSORED DELEGATES

Through the Sponsored Delegates Program IRF and its partners financially support a number of river scientists and practitioners from less developed countries to attend the International Riversymposium each year.



# Program Highlights

## DIVERSITY IN WATER

IRF hosts **Diversity in Water** to inspire diversity of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability, and to promote behaviours that welcome and embrace diversity.

This year we delved into personal resilience to build the capacity of people and communities to respond and adapt to challenges, setbacks and even crises. Our panel told their stories of overcoming challenges and shared their learnings from embracing diversity to help them 'bounce back', to recover and even to respond with optimism.

Thanks to AWP for sponsoring this year's Diversity in Water event.



## EMERGING WATER PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

The Emerging Water Professionals Program (EWPP) promotes interdisciplinary and cross generational collaboration, supporting the professional and personal development of young and emerging water leaders.

49 emerging professionals made up the fifth EWPP cohort at this year's Symposium, with 21 generously sponsored by DFAT.

The EWPP included activities deemed most popular in previous years - such as the opportunity to meet established/senior professionals at the 'Water Wisdom Breakfast', and a celebratory dinner. EWP's also had opportunities to lead activities and take part in an Innovation Challenge on the last day of the Symposium.

## HIGH LEVEL DELEGATES PROGRAM

The 12 sponsored High Level Delegate's (HLD) attending the *Riversymposium* this year were kindly funded by DFAT and the Australian Water Partnership.

The HLD cohort had access to the full *Riversymposium* program as well as a series of tailored events including a leadership program to provide the HLD's with the opportunity to share, learn and discuss leadership strategies.

The HLD's also took on other roles such as chairing sessions, panel membership, presented in sessions and participated in the Innovation Challenge as mentors and judges.





# KEYNOTE MESSAGES



## Mara Bún

PRESIDENT, AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

**Love Change: How a resilience mindset can transform river management**

“ We need to change our way of thinking and learning - climate shocks and non-linear change is occurring that need adaptation and experimenting. ”



## Peter Batey

CHAIR, MERSEY RIVERS TRUST UK

**After the inaugural Riverprize: what happened to the Mersey Basin Campaign?**

“ The Mersey Basin Campaign pioneered a partnership approach to clean up the Mersey River Basin in North-west England which led to the Mersey River winning the inaugural Thies International Riverprize in 1999. Today, more than 20 years on the Mersey Rivers Trust continues to make progress in improving water quality, waterside regeneration, stakeholder engagement and the delivery of major urban regeneration initiatives. ”



## Marcella D'Souza

DIRECTOR, WOTR CENTRE FOR RESILIENCE STUDIES INDIA

### Can our rivers flow again?

“ The ‘day-before yesterday’ is when we needed to act. India is experiencing recurrent droughts affecting the environment and livelihoods of farming communities. A whole-of-river basin, scientifically sound approach is urgently needed to mitigate the varying weather and the upstream and downstream issues. There is hope. ”



## Leith Bouly

CHAIR, SUNWATER

## Karlene Maywald

CHAIR, ICEWARM

### Basin Bookends: A River Community Perspective on the Road to Resilient Rivers

“ There will be winners and losers, we have a global challenge requiring global solutions. We must go beyond our comfort zones and understand what it is like to walk in others’ shoes. ”



## Au Shion Yee

SENIOR WATER RESOURCES SPECIALIST, ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

### Valuing our Rivers: The story of the Yangtze River Economic Belt

“ Asia Development Bank’s Yangtze Natural Capital Lab initiative has been piloting innovative financing mechanisms and new technologies to accelerate natural capital investment. ”

# Learning-Inspiring-Transforming

The Learn-Inspire-Transform (LIT) sessions are a space within the main *Riversymposium* conference program that are utilised by organisations to better engage with *Riversymposium* delegates. LIT sessions are designed to mutually benefit both the hosting organisation and conference delegates. LIT sessions offer an opportunity for organisations to showcase their commitment and capabilities to a captive audience and provide delegates with insights into the benefits of future collaboration. For delegates, LIT sessions allow them to walk away from the *Riversymposium* feeling motivated, confident, and armed with new knowledge and ideas to invest into their work.

In total 14 LIT sessions were held over the three-day program with topics, including the following sponsored sessions:

1	International Resilient Rivers Blueprint: We want your input!
2	Resilience and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6
3	Perpectives on protecting and managing our waterways: Creating insights into improving government's role in water management in Queensland
4	Can nutrient trading deliver better water quality outcomes for South-east Queensland beyond offset deals?
5	The Economic, Social and Icon value of the Brisbane River
6	The Future of Water
7	Building Catchment Resilience
8	Community Co-design - Building sustainable communities
9	Catalysing Partnerships from the Danube to the Manas
10	Community Resilience - Global skills at a local level
11	Practical solutions to strengthen river basin resilience
12	Partnering with the Bremer



The sessions were popular with delegates, particularly those who were wanting to delve deeper into particular topics. A few of the sessions were *invite only* and some organisations invited specific guests to strengthen their sessions. This was a positive way of ensuring strong numbers to the sessions and gaining greater levels of participation and engagement.

# Celebration!



THIESS INTERNATIONAL  
**Riverprize**

BY THE BERT AND VERA  
THIESS FOUNDATION

## 2019 Thiess International Riverprize

“ Receiving this award strengthens our resolve to continue this comeback story, and we hope it will inspire everyone who lives, works and plays around the James River to jump in and help out so the James remains a vital asset for our communities and for future generations. ”

- Bill Street, CEO  
James River Association

The **James River, USA** was awarded the 2019 International Riverprize at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Riverprize Gala Dinner for their outstanding achievements in river management.

Congratulations as well to our finalists, the **Chicago River, USA**, and **Whangawehi Stream, New Zealand**. All three finalists have sustainably managed and accomplished amazing restoration works for their rivers, which deserve to be celebrated and commended.





## Vera Thies Fellowship for Women

**Qing Ye** is the 2020 Vera Thies Fellow recipient. Qing Ye grew up in China. Qing Ye will be assisting the IRF with the planning of the 23rd International Riversymposium and implementing the Resilient Rivers Blueprint in China.



## Ken Thies Memorial Scholarship

**José Fernández** and **Rosie Sanderson** (represented by Andrea Salus) are the 2019 Ken Thies Scholars. The scholarship enables a student to study the International WaterCentre Master of Integrated Water Management.

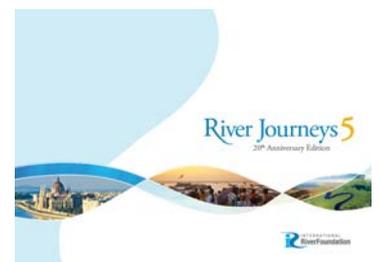


## Alumni Network

Over the past twenty years, the International RiverFoundation has built a strong network of prestigious river prize winners and finalists. The Gala Dinner was an opportunity to officially launch the Alumni Network with 19 members represented on the night. The Network provides collaborative learning opportunities for all members.

## 20th Anniversary Riverprize Gala Dinner

International RiverFoundation Director, Prof Bill Dennison, continued his tradition of creating a song to celebrate the history of the Symposium. Additionally, in light of the 20th anniversary of the Thies International Riverprize, the fifth edition of RiverJourneys (proudly sponsored by Daphne, Kareena and Danielle Wood) was launched. The book features snapshots of all previous international and regional Riverprize winners as well as their Twinning projects.



♪ And did you think this river could never win  
Well look at it, its coming back again ♪



# RiverExpo

This year's *RiverExpo* was the largest of any *Riversymposium* yet. With 14 exhibitors from both domestic and international organisations coming from government, industry, community and education.



Exhibiting is a proven and cost-effective way of connecting with people on a more personal level. Being part of *RiverExpo* provided this year's exhibitors many unique benefits and opportunities that can only be achieved through audience interaction of this nature.

Delegates utilised the *RiverExpo* space as a hub and therefore exhibitors were able to engage with delegates regularly at breaks and events held within the foyer area. The RiverFoundation has received positive feedback from those who were involved with Expo, many highlighting it as being of great value to their overall *Riversymposium* experience.

“ *RiverExpo* allows exhibitors to have a real presence; they are noticed, welcomed, valued and not lost among the crowd. ”



# Who attended?

**539**

Total Delegates



**41%**

Government

**39**

Countries



**16%**

NGO/Community



**26%**

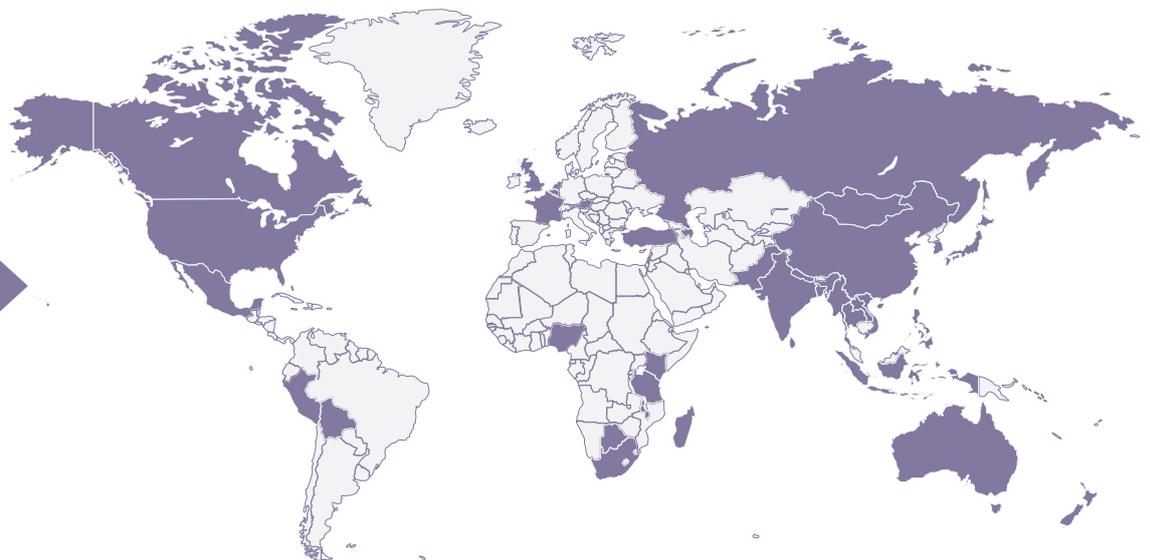
Academia

**15%**

Business/Industry



Represented Countries



# Our Global Outreach & Influence



**136K**  
impressions

**7772**

FOLLOWERS



**133.2K**  
impressions

**1072**

FOLLOWERS



**21.3K**  
impressions

**594**

FOLLOWERS





Average rating by 22<sup>nd</sup> International  
Riversymposium delegates

## Testimonials

“The event covered a vast range of topics and a large number of experts with various backgrounds were present. It was a wonderful platform for exchange and communication”

*Dr Deju Han, China*

“It was inspiring to listen to perspectives on equity and opportunity from around the world. There were very many thoughtful observations that will help me.”

*2019 Delegate, United States*

“Meeting with and listening to different professionals talk about water and river management was just so powerful. Furthermore, because of the EWPP pitch, our team met a social scientist. The scientist made me realize that we can not be successful in water and river management without the involvement of local communities who are the first contact. Therefore, I feel that this was a learning journey and an eye-opening opportunity, and professionally I feel now I have been given a voice and basic foundations to work on towards water and river management.”

*Jonathan Chikankheni, Malawi*

“Hearing how related organisations to my own evolved over time to their current strong place in the water space. Provides ideas of how to move forward for my own organisation’s viable future.”

*2019 Delegate, New Zealand*

# Our Partners

## PLATINUM PARTNER



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## GOLD PARTNERS



Queensland Government



Solutions Protecting Your World



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

## LIT SESSION PARTNERS



WATER FOR LIFE



Delivering water for prosperity



## DIVERSITY IN WATER PARTNER



## RESEARCH PARTNER



Queensland, Australia

## KEYNOTE SPONSOR



ICE WaRM

International Centre of Excellence in Water Resources Management

## WINE SPONSOR



## RIVEREXPO EXHIBITORS



GOULBURN BROKEN  
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



National Environmental Science Programme



Supported by Sunshine Coast Council

MEDIA PARTNER



Thank you for being a part of the  
22nd International Riversymposium!



# Making it Happen

## 2019 Advisory Committee

**Natalie Baker** | Chair  
International RiverFoundation

**Jacqui Atique** | Secretariat  
International RiverFoundation

**Angela Arthington**  
Griffith University

**Marian Neal**  
Australian Water Partnership

**Russell Rollason**  
Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
and Trade

**Brian McIntosh**  
International WaterCentre

**Ian Gordon**  
Queensland Government  
Department of Natural Resources,  
Mines and Energy

**Anne Simi**  
Brisbane City Council

## Strategic Planning Committee

**Eva Abal** | Chair  
International RiverFoundation

**Natalie Baker** | Secretariat  
International RiverFoundation

**John McCarthy**  
International RiverFoundation

**Bill Dennison**  
International RiverFoundation

**Selina Ward**  
International RiverFoundation

**Stuart Bunn**  
Griffith University  
Australian Rivers Institute

**Thomas Panella**  
Asia Development Bank

**Marian Neal**  
Australian Water Partnership

## Our RiverPatrons

The *RiverPatrons* Group comprises a passionate group of respected community leaders, Chief Executives and Chairs from Australian and global organisations, all who support the restoration, protection and resilience of our rivers. The *RiverPatrons* group was launched and came together for the first time as part of the International Riversymposium program this year. This inaugural event provided the *RiverPatrons* and guests:

- An opportunity to network with each other and other VIPs;
- Exposure to Brisbane as a river city and the elements that make Brisbane as such;
- An awareness to the role of ports, recreation, development and educational institutions; and
- An understanding of the IRF and its programs;

Our *RiverPatrons* champion our cause and understand the importance of the stewardship and nurturing healthy and resilient rivers now and for the future. Through our *RiverPatrons* Group, IRF also offers the opportunity for the employees and stakeholders of Patrons' organisations to learn, share, inspire and transform rivers through participating in our initiatives and activities.

Current RiverPatrons	
<b>Cr Adrian Schrinner</b>	Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council
<b>Martin Albrecht AC</b>	Albrecht Foundation
<b>Daphne Wood</b>	Wood and Thies Family
<b>Nicola Irvine</b>	Director, BMI Group
<b>Jerry Maycock</b>	CEO, Port of Brisbane
<b>Ben Pevreall</b>	Regional Vice-President, Asia Pacific, Valmont Group
<b>Peter Varghese AO (Co-chair)</b>	Chancellor, The University of Queensland
<b>John McCarthy AO (Co-chair)</b>	Director, International RiverFoundation
<b>Douglas Thompson</b>	Managing Director, Thies Pty Ltd

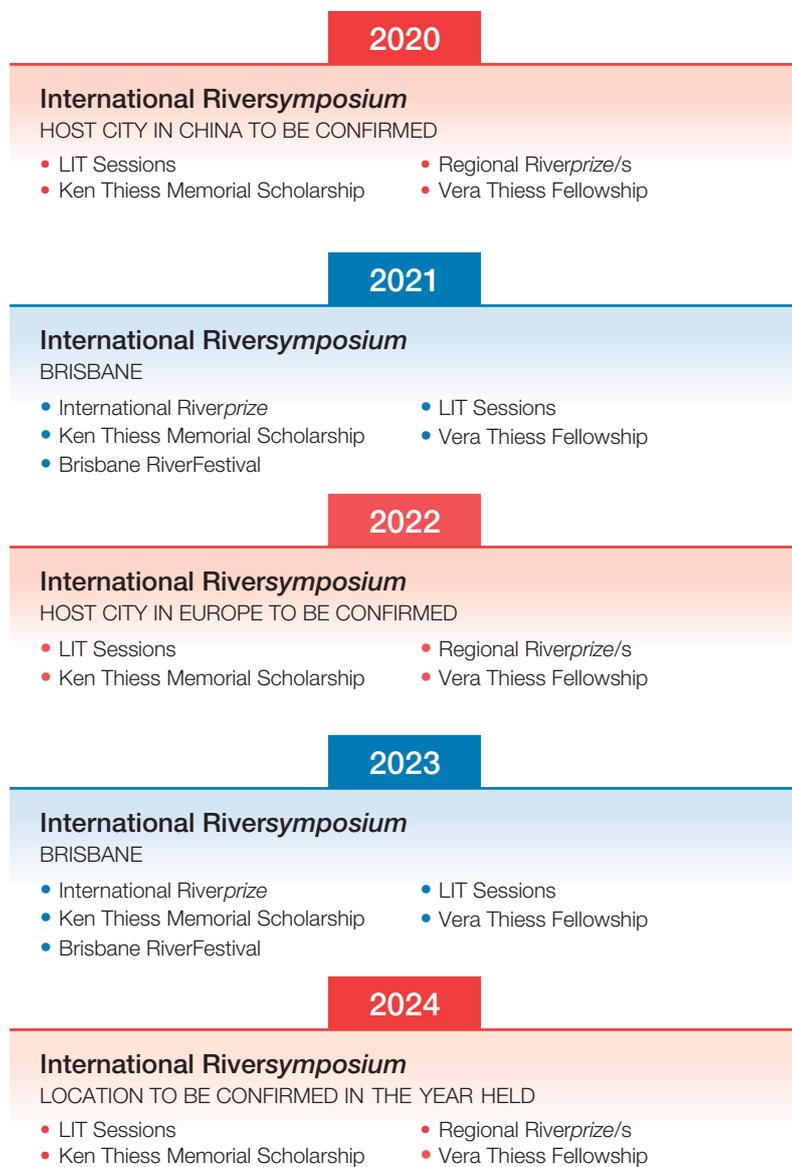


# Riversymposium: A history of knowledge-sharing, celebration and inspiration

## The IRS Journey



## Future programs / opportunities



### Riversymposium location and cycle

**BRISBANE** once every 2 years    **INTERNATIONAL** once every 2 years

