

November 2018

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Darling Harbour Wharf (Photo Credit: Paul Fletcher)

## CEO UPDATE

The 21st *Riversymposium* (held in Sydney on 14-18 October) set a new benchmark in quality of speakers and content of program, including the introduction of our thematic Learn-Inspire-Transform (LIT) sessions which had a greater emphasis on learning and development and provided training and capacity-building opportunities for delegates.

This year's theme of 'Embracing Innovation' recognised the role and need for innovation in addressing the challenges of changing climate, population growth and other pressures on our rivers and communities. It has been over a month since the conference but the excitement, stories, collaborative discussions are continuing.

Thank you to the Bert and Vera Thies Foundation for your continued funding to support the delivery of our key programs, including the Bert and Vera Thies Australasia Riverprize, the Vera Thies Fellowship for Women and the Ken Thies Memorial Scholarship. We would also like to sincerely thank our sponsors, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, The Australian Water Partnership, University of New South Wales, Sydney Water, Brisbane City Council and OceanaGold, for their generous support.

The planning for the 22nd *Riversymposium*, which comes back to Brisbane on 20-24 October 2019, is already in full swing.

Based on the positive feedback we had on our LIT sessions, we will continue to incorporate these interactive workshops into our program.

Next year's symposium marks the 20th anniversary year for awarding the International Riverprize. Our newly-formed Alumni network will once again play an important part in celebrating this anniversary. In line with the 22nd *Riversymposium's* theme of Resilient Rivers, the IRF will be launching the Resilient Rivers Blueprint for the World's Rivers – a Blueprint for organisations around the world to transform their rivers into resilient rivers. We welcome the continued support of our partners to join us in this exciting journey!



Dr Eva Abal  
CEO, International RiverFoundation



"I HEAR PANELISTS SHARING,  
I WATCH US GROW  
WE'LL LEARN MUCH MORE  
THAN WE'LL NEVER KNOW"

*Prof. Bill Dennison, 2018 Keynote Speaker*



# 21ST INTERNATIONAL RIVERSYMPIOSIUM

14 - 18TH  
OCTOBER, 2018



"Thanks for a fantastic symposium... The buzz word for me at the conference was 'novel ecologies'"

*Andrew Kelly,  
Yarra Riverkeeper*



"We were primed for one-on-one conversations around important events in our careers"

*Prof. Angela Arthington,  
EWPP Program*



# RIVERSYMPOSIUM WRAP UP & HIGHLIGHTS

Despite the rainy weather in Sydney for the duration of the conference, the 21st International Riversymposium was a great success for all involved!

Pre-conference activities commenced on Sunday with a small scale version of the Amazing Race around Darling Harbour as part of the Emerging Water Professionals Program. This was then followed by a two hour Sydney Harbour evening cruise, where attendees were welcomed by our Chair, Professor Paul Greenfield and Paul Plowman, Sydney Waters' General Manager, Liveable City Solutions.

On Monday the conference officially kicked off, with a keynote address by Professor Rebekah Brown. In the evening Diversity in Water was held, a panel session sponsored by the Australian Water Partnership.

Tuesday morning we were treated to speeches by Dr. Ir. Khin. Ni Ni Thein and Wouter T. Lincklaen Arriens. The Gala Dinner was held in the evening, and amidst good company and delicious food, the Vera Thies Fellowship recipients, Emerging River Professional Award, and two Riverprize winners were announced.

The last official day of the conference began with a keynote speech by Professor Bill Dennison, and wrapped up with a closing plenary, including a panel session with our emerging water professionals. The activities didn't end there however, as the emerging water professionals celebrated with one final dinner, followed by study tours the next day.

On behalf of the International RiverFoundation team we'd like to thank everyone who participated in the conference and for making it the success it was!



MANAGED BY

# PASIG RIVER WINS INAUGURAL ASIA RIVERPRIZE!

Congratulations to the Pasig River, who was awarded the inaugural Asia Riverprize at the 21st International Riversymposium gala dinner.

In the 1990s, the Pasig River was declared biologically dead due to persistent pollution caused by population growth and industrial development along its riverbanks.

However, thanks to the river restoration efforts of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) and its partners, the Pasig River has been brought back to life. These efforts have included delivering quality projects, programs, and activities in easement recovery, riverbank development, public awareness, waste management and water quality management.

We would like to say a special thank you to the Australian Water Partnership for sponsoring this award.

***"We promise to work even harder to achieve our mandate and to continue to inspire the world and send the positive message that the seemingly impossible is actually possible"***

*George De La Rama,  
Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission*



*Representatives from the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission accepting the award from the Australian Water Partnership CEO, Dr Nick Schofield. (Photo credit: Paul Fletcher)*

# NEW ZEALAND BEATS AUSTRALIA TO WIN AUSTRALASIA RIVERPRIZE!



*Representatives from the Whangawehi Catchment Group accepting the award from Mark and Rielly Thiess. (Photo credit: Paul Fletcher)*

***"A big thank you to the whole team and the wider community. This award celebrates the commitment of a dedicated community that has delivered some key milestones over the past 4 years."***

*- Pat O'Brien,  
Chairman of the Whangawehi Catchment Group*

The Whangawehi Stream (New Zealand) won this year's Bert and Vera Thiess Australasia Riverprize.

Under a community-led catchment management plan, the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group has been helping farmers manage pests and revegetate the river margins, resulting in the establishment of 160,000 native trees, 60ha of riparian margins and the retirement of a 10ha of native bush block. This project actively engaged with Maori leaders, who were instrumental in setting up the vision and achieving and measuring the progress made.

Thanks to the Bert and Vera Thiess Foundation for their continued support to award this prize!

# CONGRATULATIONS JOSÉ! OUR 2018 EMERGING RIVER PROFESSIONALS AWARD WINNER

José Fernández won this year's Emerging River Professionals Award (ERPA). ERPA was sponsored by the OceanaGold Corporation, to recognise and reward early career river professionals.



*Prof Paul Greenfield, José Fernández, Nantale Nsibirwa, Julie Francis, and Prof Bill Dennison. (Photo credit: Paul Fletcher)*

José works at AQUAFONDO in Peru and demonstrated innovation, excellence and leadership developing an integrated water management system in the local community of San Pedro de Casta, Lima. The judges were impressed by the high professionalism, skills and passion of José and finalists, Ms Nantale Nsibirwa, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and Ms Julie Francis, Melbourne Water, Australia.

# MEET OUR 2018 VERA THIESS FELLOWSHIP FOR WOMEN RECIPIENTS!

We are pleased to announce this year's Vera Thuess Fellowship for Women recipients: Charity Mundava from Zimbabwe and Carmina Rivera from the Philippines.

Charity has a PhD in spatial science and is passionate about the sustainable management of our planet. She works at WaterNSW as a spatial scientist in the water industry providing advice for projects relating to water quality and catchment management.

Carmina has a degree in Economics and recently completed her Masters of Integrated Water Management. She seeks to expand her career in the water sector through her interests in sustainable development, policy and governance, and alternative financing for water supply and sanitation.

Through the Vera Thuess Fellowship program, Carmina and Charity will measure the impact of IRF's programs and present their findings at next year's *Riversymposium*. We will keep you updated as the projects unfold over the coming months.



*Daphne Wood, Vera Thuess' daughter with Carmina Rivera and Charity Mundava (Photo credit: Paul Fletcher)*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING VERA THIESS FELLOW

**"Through the Vera Thuess Fellowship, I was given the opportunity to work with different river organizations and communities around the world. As my Fellowship ends, I am looking for opportunities in the water sector where I can use the skills, experiences, and perspectives I have gained with the Fellowship. My vision is to inspire and enable others like the Vera Thuess Fellowship has inspired me."**

*Marie Cabriole,  
2017 Vera Thuess Fellow*



# ALUMNI NETWORK CHARTER IS UNVEILED AT RIVERSYMPOSIUM

In May 2018, a collaborative of IRF Alumni from around the world began participating in monthly planning sessions to develop and foster a robust network of river leaders consisting of former *Riverprize* winners and finalists. The IRF appreciates the hard work of this diverse Alumni steering committee that representing the following river basins.

- Alexander River, Israel
- Aorere River, New Zealand
- Danube and Rhine Rivers, Europe
- Lake Simcoe, Canada
- Mekong River, Southeast Asia
- Mara River, Africa
- Pasig River, Philippines
- Lake Macquarie and Lake Eyre, Australia
- Willamette, Siuslaw, Niagara, and San Antonio Rivers, USA

The Network's Charter was unveiled during a special session held at *Riversymposium*. The committee will continue to reach out to Alumni into 2019 to promote relationship-building among river leaders, document and celebrate their accomplishments, and to honour this incredible Alumni community at *Riversymposium 2019* in Brisbane. Stay tuned as the Network unfolds and engages members.



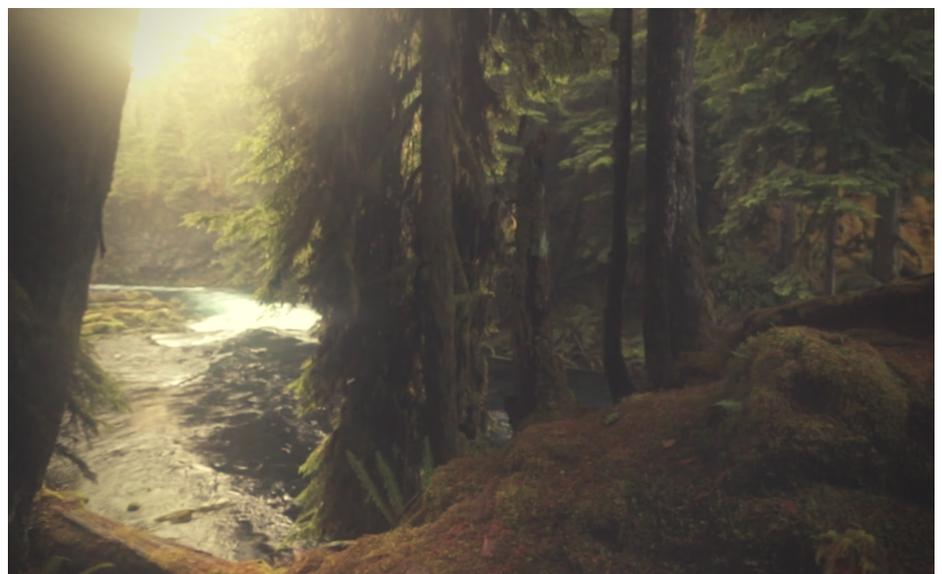
## THE WILLAMETTE RIVER INITIATIVE - 10 YEARS ON

The Willamette River Initiative, winner of the 2012 Thies International *Riverprize* is approaching its 10-year budgeted life span, and rather than perceiving this as the end of a great story, this large collaboration of non-profit, public, and tribal partners is headed into an exciting phase of developing a "Willamette Network" that will sustain the river movement indefinitely.

A focus of the Willamette partnership today is broader inclusion and engagement of the full Willamette community and promoting greater diversity in conservation. Several of the Willamette partners have created beautiful river stories to share with the public, including a Willamette film that captures the restoration impacts and connections to local communities.  
(<https://vimeo.com/137996609>)

**"We envision a river health movement that is effective and relevant to all the Willamette Basin's diverse communities, and where the benefits and impacts of river health are shared equitably among all."**

*- Excerpt from Willamette River Initiative Equity Statement*



*Willamette River, Oregon, USA, from the 2016 film UPRIVER  
(Photo Credit: UPRIVER)*

# RESILIENT RIVERS BLUEPRINT

The IRF, together with a small group of Founding Partners, is excited to be driving the development of an overarching 'Resilient Rivers Blueprint', that will identify the key actions that we will take to improve the capacity of our rivers and communities to recover from disturbances and return to a healthy state. The Blueprint will utilise existing tools and identify innovative new approaches and technologies to build a river resilience network. Our goal is to develop a Blueprint which will be applicable to rivers world- wide and will inspire a global transformation from river recovery to river resilience.

River basin organisations from around the world will be invited to become signatories to the Blueprint identifying their commitment to developing river basin specific roadmaps in their respective regions.

The IRF is currently seeking expressions of interest from international experts to be part of the Independent Expert Panel, who will drive the development of the Blueprint. The IRF will promote the framework and development of the Blueprint during the first six months of 2019, with a view to formally launching the Blueprint at next years' *Riversymposium* in Brisbane in October.

We will keep you updated on progress of the Blueprint over the coming months. Contact [carla@riverfoundation.org.au](mailto:carla@riverfoundation.org.au) if you would like to be involved or would like more information.

## PHASE 1 RESILIENT RIVERS FRAMEWORK

July 2018 - Dec 2018

## PHASE 2 RESILIENT RIVERS ROADSHOW

Dec 2018 - Aug 2019

## PHASE 3 RESILIENT RIVERS BLUEPRINT

Aug 2019 - Oct 2019

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS! - 2019 RIVERSYMPIOSIUM

Abstracts for the 22nd International *Riversymposium* in Brisbane, Australia (20 - 24 October 2019), will be opening next month. The *Riversymposium* Program Committee is looking for your contribution to present on global best practice, advances in river science, innovative research, policy developments, and solutions to challenges faced by river professionals on their journey to resilient rivers. Presenting is a valuable opportunity to meet your global community of river professionals.

### Why submit an abstract?

- Validate and disseminate your work by presenting it to a diverse international audience
- Present your innovative solutions to the world's river basin challenges
- Learn and grow professionally through privileged access to the best content, cross-sector knowledge and diverse experiences
- Expand your network and meet new professional partners
- Be inspired by our emerging river and water professionals
- Every presenter is eligible for discounted registration fees

## NEW STAFF

**Chris Skelton** joined IRF one day a week in July as consultant accountant. Chris has over 35 years' experience in professional services encompassing advisory, accounting and audit services to a diverse range of industries covering private business and public companies including not for profit entities.



*Chris Skelton*

**Sylvia Liu** commenced work at the IRF in September as an intern to provide support for communications. Sylvia has recently been employed three days per week in the position of Communications Officer. Sylvia will be graduating from the Queensland University of Technology at the end of the year with a dual degree in Business and Design. She is passionate about user experience design and would like to further increase awareness of the IRF brand internationally.



*Sylvia Liu*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **31st Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) Conference**

4-6 December 2018 | Hobart, Australia  
<http://www.awms.org.au/conference>

### **Innovate 4 Water**

6-7 Feb 2019 | Kisumu, Kenya  
<https://www.susana.org/en/news-and-events/sanitation-events/upcoming-events/details/245>

### **2019 Floodplain Management Australia National Conference**

14-17 May 2019 | Canberra, Australia  
<https://floodplainconference.com/>

### **22nd International Riversymposium**

20-24 October | Brisbane, Australia  
[www.riversymposium.com](http://www.riversymposium.com)  
Call for abstracts coming soon!