



INTERNATIONAL
RiverFoundation

ANNUAL REPORT
2016 / 2017

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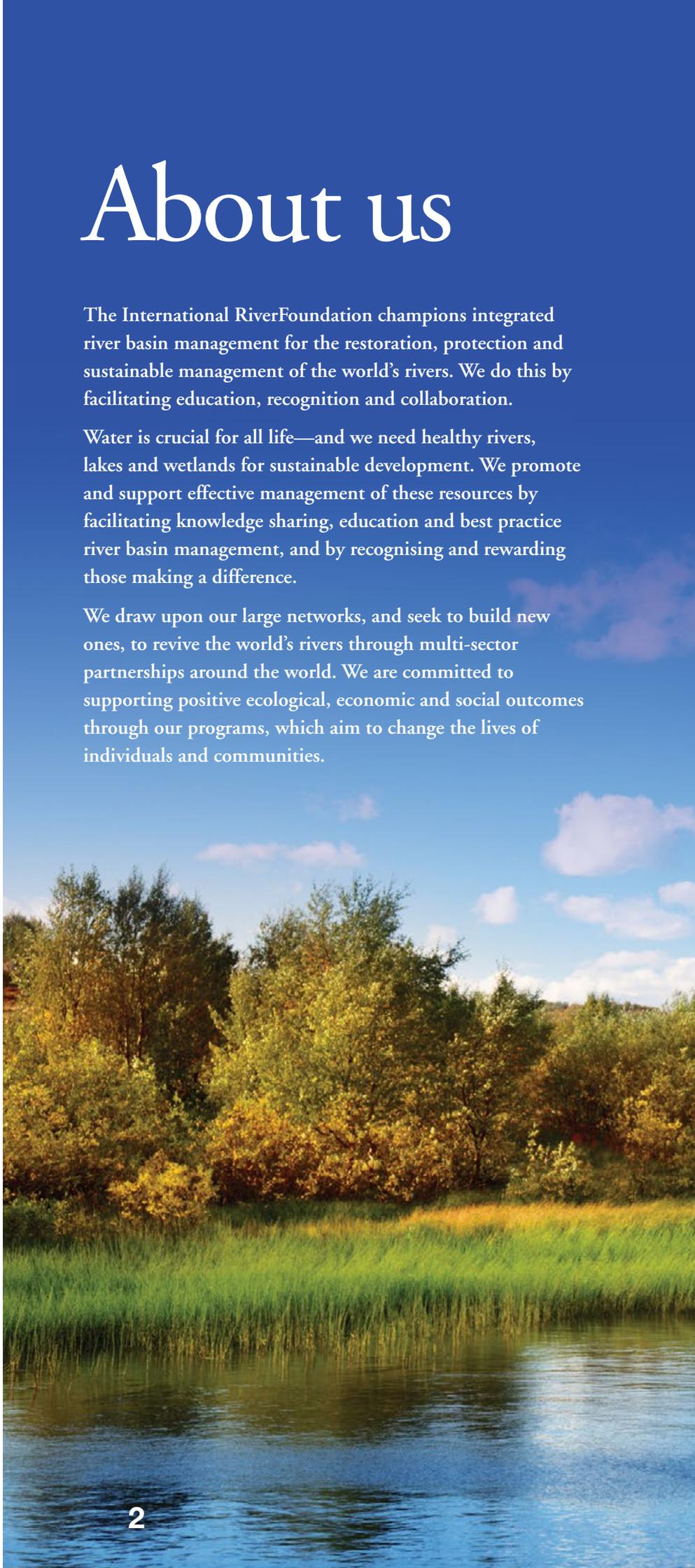
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About us

The International RiverFoundation champions integrated river basin management for the restoration, protection and sustainable management of the world’s rivers. We do this by facilitating education, recognition and collaboration.

Water is crucial for all life—and we need healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands for sustainable development. We promote and support effective management of these resources by facilitating knowledge sharing, education and best practice river basin management, and by recognising and rewarding those making a difference.

We draw upon our large networks, and seek to build new ones, to revive the world’s rivers through multi-sector partnerships around the world. We are committed to supporting positive ecological, economic and social outcomes through our programs, which aim to change the lives of individuals and communities.



Our goals

- To recognise, reward and replicate exceptional efforts in the protection, restoration and sustainable management of the world's rivers,
- To facilitate global knowledge sharing in sustainable, integrated river basin management,
- To raise awareness of the important environmental, economic, scientific, social and cultural aspects of rivers,
- To facilitate multi-sector partnerships and alliances that further global action to protect and revive rivers, and
- To empower and support individuals to make a positive contribution towards the world's river basins

Our vision

We envision a future in which people and ecosystems benefit from sustainably managed rivers.

A message from our Chairman & CEO

In a world where many of our rivers and their surrounding communities and ecosystems are struggling, threatened by multiple impacts of pollution, climate change and ineffective governance, the International RiverFoundation (IRF) is proud to embody a positive, encouraging and action-oriented approach to managing our water resources, where we foster innovative solutions, celebrate the successes and strive to achieve more.

Our focus on the three pillars of Education, Recognition and Collaboration continues to underpin our priorities and is at the core of everything we do. We educate through our scholarships, fellowships and learning opportunities; we recognise those making a difference through our *Riverprizes* and other awards; and we facilitate collaboration through our multi-sector transdisciplinary river recovery projects, *Twinning* exchanges, the International *Riversymposium* and networking events.

The last two years have seen many milestones reached for IRF, particularly for the International *Riversymposium*. The symposium was held outside of Australia for the first time in 2016, taking place in New Delhi, India. Not only was the conference itself a great success in the eyes of participants, sponsors and IRF alike, but it allowed us to form closer relationships with partners in Asia and to meet many passionate river managers from that part of the world who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to attend *Riversymposium*. We also reached the major milestone of the 20th International *Riversymposium* in 2017, held in its founding city of Brisbane, where we continue to collaborate with local partners to increase awareness about Brisbane's world-leading water expertise.

We have continued to support emerging water leaders, hosting dozens of future leaders through our Emerging Water Professionals Program, awarding two Emerging River Professional Awards, four Ken Thiess Scholarships and two Vera Thiess Fellowships for Women working in the field of water. Furthermore, we have awarded two more Thiess International *Riverprizes*, growing our incredible group of *Riverprize* alumni who inspire energy and action among communities across the world.

Thank you to the generous support of our sponsors, donors and pro-bono partners, IRF is in a stable financial position and will continue to implement our life-changing programs. We cannot thank the Bert and Vera Thiess Foundation enough for their support and their belief in our vision. We also acknowledge the tremendous support from Brisbane City Council, Mr Martin Albrecht AM, Thiess Pty Ltd, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the World Bank, and our many *Riversymposium* partners and sponsors, without whom we could not continue to work towards our vision. Special thanks also go to our passionate Board, staff and supporters.

Over the next few years, IRF will prioritise engagement across a number of stakeholder groups. We will introduce new and innovative ways for people to become involved with IRF, whether it is through a *Twinning* exchange, a river recovery program, or as part of an elite network of ambassadors and champions who recognise the importance of integrated river basin management for the restoration, protection and sustainable management of the world's rivers. We will also be reconnecting with our valued *Riverprize* alumni and providing increased training opportunities through the International *Riversymposium*.

Much of the world live, work and play in rivers. This demand will not change. IRF aims to network and enthuse those who have a responsibility for ensuring that living, working and playing in our rivers remains possible.

Dr Paul F Greenfield AO
CHAIRMAN



Dr Eva Abal
CEO



Collaboration

International Riversymposium

The International Riversymposium was first held in Brisbane in 1998, providing a platform for river managers, policy developers, scientists, consultants, NGOs and community organisations to share knowledge and innovative ideas on all aspects of river and water management.

By facilitating partnerships between key stakeholders, the International Riversymposium celebrates the environmental, economic and social value of rivers across the globe. The symposium provides an international forum for examining best practice in river and watershed management.

Through the Riversymposium, the International RiverFoundation has hosted thousands of delegates from all over the world.

Riversymposium reach



600+
Delegates



30,000+

Visits to the Riversymposium website annually



160

Countries around the World reached through communication channels



16,000+

People in the IRF network



Local and international media exposure



2016 The 19th International Riversymposium

was held outside of Australia for the first time, in New Delhi, India. Thanks to strong support from the World Bank, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brisbane City Council, many regional partners and hundreds of passionate delegates, the 2016 symposium was a great success.

2017 A decade on from the hugely successful 10th International Riversymposium and Environmental Flows Conference, International RiverFoundation invited water experts the **20th International Riversymposium and Environmental Flows Conference** in Brisbane in 2017 to reignite this conversation, with a focus on exploring the progress made, and challenges faced, since the release of the 2007 Brisbane Declaration and Global Action Agenda.



Twinning

This financial year saw the completion of two Australian Government Twinning Projects: Oxley Creek, Bremer River in South East Queensland and Glenelg Hopkins Rivers, Victoria.

Five Twinning projects will continue into 2018: four International projects, one based in Australia, one in Kenya and two in the United States; and one Australian project.

The two projects that were completed this year are:

Oxley Creek and Bremer River Catchment

With the support of the Oxley Creek Catchment Association, the Bremer River Catchment focussed on strengthening community group collaboration and communication as well as increasing partnership with industry. It formed the Bremer River Network, an overarching communication and collaboration network across the entire catchment. The network is a forum to bring together community, catchment, land management and similar groups from across the Bremer River Catchment and assist in communications and skill and knowledge sharing.

Glenelg Hopkins Rivers, Victoria

Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority has used its IRF twinning funds to run the Waterway Management Twinning Program. The program pairs river management professionals from across south-eastern Australia to share ideas, build capacity and extend networks, all with the purpose of collaborating to deliver world class river protection and rehabilitation projects.

The Program had ten participants from six organisations including: North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA), OzFish Unlimited, the Arthur Rylah Institute, Melbourne Water, the Basalt to Bay Landcare Network and Glenelg Hopkins CMA.



Collaboration

The four International projects are:

Tweed Shire, New South Wales, Australia and Nairobi, Kenya

This mentoring project commenced in 2003 and is both the longest running Twinning project to which the International RiverFoundation is associated and the most inspiring. To quote Dr Natalie Baker, the International RiverFoundation Program Manager in a 2008 report,

“The richness in human spirit of children I met in Kenya living in dire conditions was inspiring.

Given the basics of life (clean water, sanitation, education) their potential is unlimited”

The aim of the project is increasing access to safe water and sanitation, improving community and environmental health for Kenyan families, and strengthening bonds of friendship with the Tweed community. The project has resulted in the installation of small scale water purification stations, and included significant attention to water supply, community capacity building and environmental health initiatives. Over \$120,000 was spent on this project in 2016-17, mostly to operate and maintain the water purification systems. Funds are raised from both philanthropic sources and employees of the Tweed Shire and the Tweed Shire Council itself.

Charles River, Massachusetts, USA and Jarabacoa Rivers, Dominican Republic

This Twinning partnership between the Charles River Watershed Association and four local partners in the City of Jarabacoa – The Nature Conservancy Dominican Republic, Plan Yaque, The National Environmental School, and the City of Jarabacoa – focuses on community engagement, water quality and river restoration. CRWA is helping to assess river conditions, build a strong local constituency for river protection, and develop a long term plan for river restoration and protection. The overarching goal is to unite the cities of Boston and Jarabacoa around the shared goal of cleaning up rivers and training a new generation of environmental scientists. The project will be completed in 2018.

Willamette River, Oregon, USA and Rio Laja, central Mexico

The Willamette project team initially focused on increasing awareness and gaining understanding and participation in watershed management via education programs. After strengthening multi-stakeholder participation, diverse sources of financial, technical and administrative support were put into place. Then, pilot projects were implemented to demonstrate improvements. The project is in its final stages, during which time forums of stakeholders are held for reflection, discussion and learning so that watershed protection and restoration continues.

Mara River, Kenya and Sondu Miriu River, Lake Victoria, Kenya

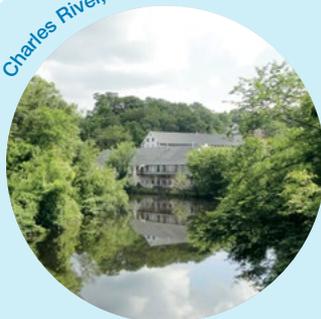
The Mara River, as winner of the Thiess International Riverprize in 2013, developed knowledge and skills for water quality improvement and maintenance in Kenya’s specific environment. This expertise was used to assist the Sondu Miriu River Basin, also in Kenya.

Issues addressed, and that will continue to be addressed in 2018, include increasing strategies for improving river basin management, water quality and quantity, reducing catchment degradation and sourcing finances.

Sunshine Coast Rivers, Queensland, Australia and Fig Tree Catchment, Yeppoon, Queensland, Australia

The partnership between the Sunshine Coast River Initiative and Capricornia Catchment will build the capacity of the Capricorn Coast region to plan for, develop and implement best practice measures to protect and manage the environmental values of the waterway running through the expanding cityscape of Yeppoon that has a direct impact on a section of the Great Barrier Reef. Project planning has been completed and work will commence in 2018.

Charles River, USA



Jarabacoa Rivers, Dominican Republic



The Bremer River Fund

The Bremer River Fund has been operating under the auspice of the International RiverFoundation since 2010. The Bremer River Fund is a key facilitator of the Bremer River Network, which is an umbrella organisation for the environment groups in the Bremer River Catchment Area (below).

In 2017, the Bremer River Network was officially launched. Since its inception, the Network has had ever-increasing momentum, with a growth in numbers, activity, and productivity in the catchment. Through the Network's social media avenues; their Facebook page, website and the quarterly newsletter, the Bremer River Blog; the Network has been the collective voice for the environment-focussed groups in the catchment. The Network has also promoted the member groups' hard work and efforts with the first Bremer River tour, which showcased four of the member groups' sites. The Network helps to facilitate improved communication between and within the catchment area, and has connected volunteers with environment groups in the catchment, and helped establish a Bushcare site in North Ipswich. We look forward to seeing the Network continue to grow and develop over the coming year.



Recognition

Thiess International Riverprize winners

2017

Winner: San Antonio River Authority, San Antonio River, Texas, USA

The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) have been managing point-source pollution issues effectively in their 10,000 square-kilometre basin since the late 1980s, leading to the return of healthy aquatic and riparian habitat. SARA's \$384 million San Antonio River Improvements Project included flood management, amenities, ecosystem restoration and recreational improvements to over 13 miles of the San Antonio River (below right). SARA was also responsible for the famous 15-mile San Antonio River Walk – a world-leading example of inspiring urban park design and prosperous riverfront development connecting over 2000 acres of public park land and attracting over 11.5 million visitors annually.

Finalists:

Pasig River, Philippines, Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission; Tweed River, United Kingdom; Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers, Alaska, USA, Emerging River Professional Award



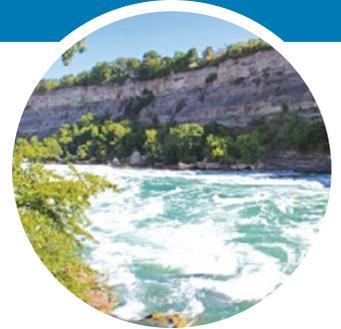
2016

Winner: Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper, Niagara River, USA

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper (right) has leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in cross-sector partnerships to place freshwater systems at the heart of the community, which now values and maintains the integrity of these systems. Years of hard work has seen the transformation of the Niagara River from a historical rust belt region to a newly restored ecosystem for the Great Lakes.

Finalists:

Segura River, Spain; Segura River Basin Authority and Murcia Government Regional Water Department
Elwha River, USA; US Department of the Interior and Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe



Emerging River Professional Award

2017

Winner: Lauren Zielinski (USA)

Lauren Zielinski specialises in the monitoring and evaluation of river systems, focusing on river restoration and environmental flow projects. She was awarded the ERPA for her work on creating a monitoring and adaptive management framework for environmental flows in the Mara River Basin.

Finalists:

Dean Muruven (Netherlands)
Tatenda Dalu (South Africa)

2016

Winner: Tero Mustonen (Finland)

Tero is a post-doctoral researcher with the University of Eastern Finland and a professional fisher. Tero won the ERPA in 2016 for his successful efforts to incorporate traditional knowledge and science into monitoring and restoring watersheds in North Karelia, Finland.

Finalists:

Lee Garnett (Australia)
Jamie Ruprecht (Australia)

Education

Vera Thiess Fellowship for Women

The Vera Thiess Fellowship gives women the opportunity to gain valuable work experience through the IRF and its partners, with the goal of advancing women's participation in water and river management. This fellowship goes not only towards supporting the selected candidate, but towards continuing the important work of bridging the gap in women's participation in river basin management.

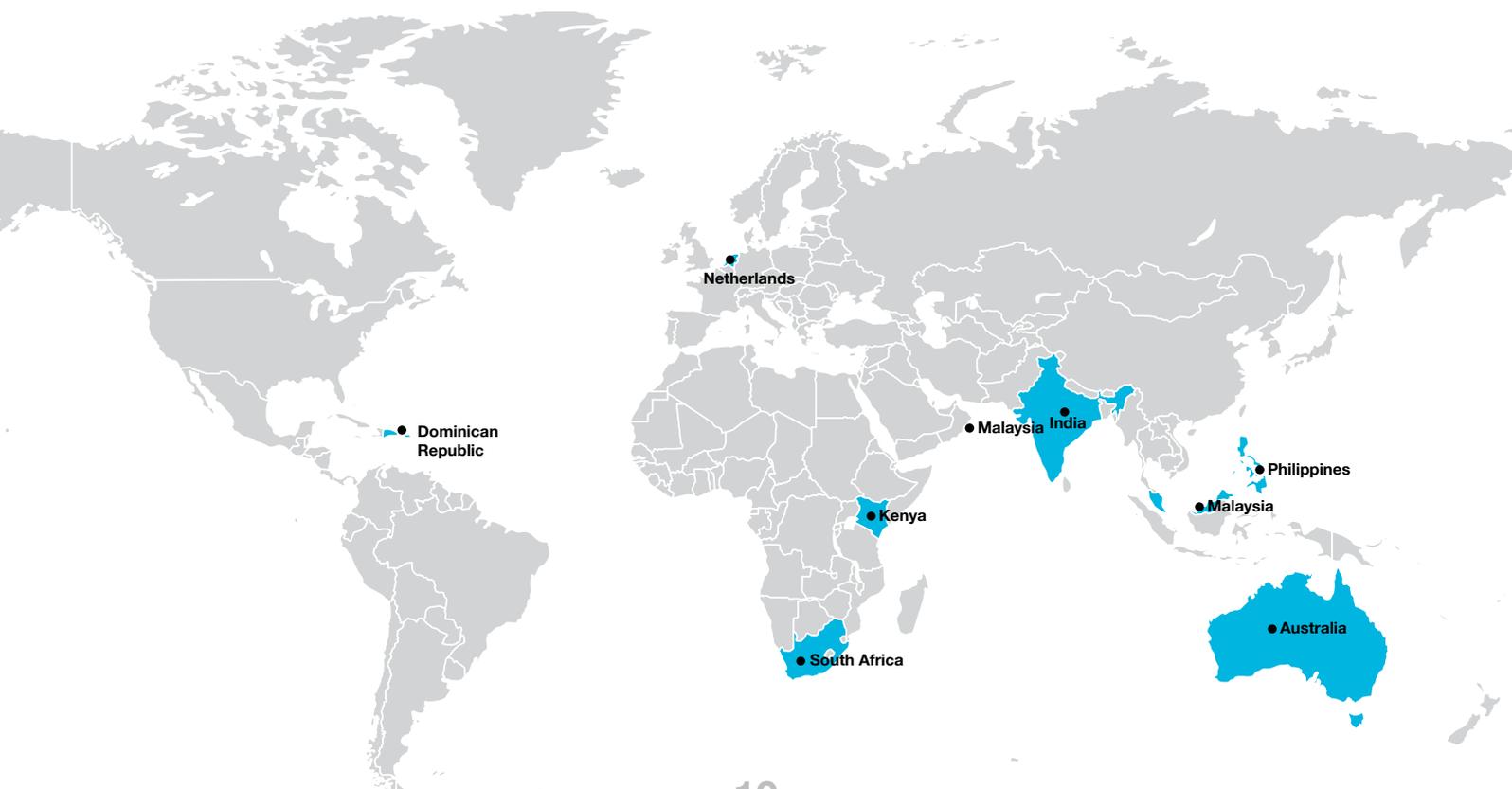
Awarded in the name of the late Vera Thiess, a long-time supporter of the IRF, the Fellowship recognises Vera's and the Thiess family's long-time philanthropic support and commitment to forward-looking initiatives of the International RiverFoundation. Through the Fellowship, we honour Vera's legacy by supporting women's involvement in river basin and water management. New fellows are announced at the International Riversymposium's Gala Dinner the year prior.

2018 Fellow: Marie Aislinn Cabriole (Philippines)

Marie studied a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at the University of the Philippines in Los Banos. Through the Vera Thiess Fellowship, Marie wishes to empower women in the water sector by collaborating with the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC, Philippines) to strengthen the role of women in the rehabilitation and management of Pasig River. Activities will be focused on community involvement, gender mainstreaming, water leadership, and sustainable river/urban communities.

2017 Fellow: Suparana Katyaini (India)

Suparana Katyaini recently completed her PhD at IIT Guwahati, focusing on bridging the gap between science and policy, and emphasising the role of women in governing transboundary rivers. Through the Vera Thiess Fellowship, Suparana contributed to water literacy by focusing on women's voices and dialogue in the governance of the Brahmaputra River in South Asia.



Ken Thiess Memorial Scholarship

2017 scholarship recipients:

Camaria Holder (Antigua and Barbuda)

(pictured right with Jane and Paul Thiess)

Rej Bungabong (Philippines)

(pictured far right with Jane and Paul Thiess)

2016 scholarship recipients:

Denise Cheah (Malaysia)

Jackline Muturi (Kenya)



The Emerging Water Professionals Program

The Emerging Water Professionals Program (EWPP) has grown from strength to strength and is becoming well known among the community of young and early-career water professionals.

Strong, consistent support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has now enabled over 120 emerging water professionals to participate in the program, which promotes

interdisciplinary and cross-generational collaboration, supporting the professional and personal development of young and emerging water leaders.

IRF fosters its network of emerging water professionals all year round by offering activities, sharing opportunities and providing a supportive platform to maintain and nurture relationships. The EWPP culminates annually at the IRS, where a tailored program of events allows emerging water professionals to expand their networks, build their skills and gain inspiration from others.



“The program has helped me gain confidence. I never imagined myself standing in front of the world’s finest water professionals giving a closing ceremony speech. It was such an honour to me”

Emerging Water Professional, 2017

^ 2017 Emerging Water Professionals at the 20th International Riversymposium

Sustainable development

The IRF's ongoing commitment to global sustainable development is underpinned by the following principles:

- Freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, livelihoods, development and the environment
- We need an integrated approach to river basin development and management including scientists, users, planners and policymakers at all levels
- Women and younger generations play a central part in the provision and use of water and the management of natural resources
- Water has an economic and social value in all its competing uses, and
- WASH (Water, Sanitation and Health) is essential in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In action, these principles are applied to IRF programs and projects that contribute to:

- Alleviating poverty and disease
- Protecting against natural disasters
- Conserving and reusing water
- Encouraging sustainable urban development
- Promoting agricultural production, sustainable livelihoods and rural water supply
- Restoring and protecting aquatic ecosystems
- Resolving water and transboundary conflicts, and
- Sharing knowledge to build capacity

The IRF is a member of the **Australian Council For International Development (ACFID)**, the peak council of Australian nongovernment organisations. The IRF is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, which sets out standards of accountability in the areas of program principles, public engagement and organisation. If you have a complaint regarding a breach of the Code, please contact the Code of Conduct Committee at main@acfid.asn.au.



< Community Planting day with Michael Gilles Environmental Visitor Centre officer and local and interstate visitors, Sunshine Coast, Queensland

IRF staff & Board

Staff

Staff member	2016	2017	2018
Eva Abal CEO			
Danielle Andlemac Bremer River Project Officer			
Ian Atkinson CEO			
Natalie Baker* Riversymposium Manager			
Abdula Bansuan, Project Coordinator, Philippines			
Sharyn Burgin Riversymposium support			
Kathy Chaston Radway Twinning and Project Officer			
Hannah Collins Bremer River Project Officer			
Patricia Dalby, Marketing & Communications Manager			
Thomas Foster Riversymposium support			
John Hayes Accountant			
Danielle LeBlanc Relieving Program Manager			
Kelly McMillan Events Coordinator			
Vanh Mixap, Emerging Water Professionals Coordinator			
Tanushree Rao Riversymposium support			
Carmina Rivera Program Support Officer			
Nick Schofield CEO			
Charlotte Spliethoff Program Manager			
Internship / work experience	2016	2017	2018
Jonah Bennett			
Shannon Chang			
Junjie Chen			
Chia Ching			

* Supported by Brisbane City Council

Board

Board member	2016	2017	2018
Martin Albrecht			
Bill Dennison			
Paul Greenfield (Chairman)			
Roger Higgins			
John McCarthy			
Craig Morton			
Deborah Nias			
Peter Rowley			
Selina Ward			
Philip Weller			
Michael Wright			

Financial summary

Financial year	2015	2016	2017
Income	\$1,375,004	\$1,988,310	\$1,714,838
Expenses	\$1,725,581	\$1,856,391	\$1,564,585
Assets	\$760,311	\$1,022,900	\$700,586
Liabilities	\$925,758	\$1,056,428	\$583,861

As a not-for-profit organisation, the International RiverFoundation benefits from sponsorships and donations to fund much of its River Basin Management activities. During the year the Foundation has undertaken a range of actions to secure funding, to allow the continued support of its business plan. It has undertaken a strategic initiative to maintain a high level of income while reducing costs so that a positive equity position can be attained and maintained in future years.

Major income generating activities during the 2017 financial year were:

- \$200,000 sponsorship from the Brisbane City Council
- \$246,000 from the Commonwealth and Queensland State Governments
- \$560,000 from philanthropic patrons
- \$200,000 income from sponsors and delegates to the 2016 and 2017 International Riversymposiums
- \$490,000 in both monetary and non-monetary support from the business community, including Thiess Ltd, OceanaGold, PKF Hackett, BMT WBM and World Bank.

Major expenditure outlays were:

- \$300,000 Thiess International Riverprize winners; Lake Eyre, Australia and Buffalo-Niagara Rivers, USA
- \$50,000 Thiess Family Scholarships / Fellowships
- \$200,000 Australian Government Riverprize winners; Sunshine Coast and Murray River
- \$200,000 towards Twinning projects via the Thiess International Riverprize, the Tweed Shire NSW to Kenya and Australian Government projects for Oxley Creek and Glenelg Hopkins Rivers
- \$82,000 OceanaGold project expenditure in the Philippines
- \$35,000 Queensland Government project in the Bremer River catchment
- Other costs in this financial year were associated with the 2016 and 2017 International Riversymposiums and administrative outlays.

There was a profit for this financial year of just over \$150,000, an increase over the previous year of \$20,000.

For the full financial audited report please visit the International RiverFoundation website at:

<http://riverfoundation.org.au/publications>

Partners

The Bert and Vera
Thiess Foundation



The
Albrecht Foundation

Dedicated to a better Brisbane



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



THE WORLD BANK
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Australian Government
Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources



