



INTERNATIONAL
RiverFoundation

Annual Report 2017 / 2018

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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
- 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 the multiple impacts of pollution, climate change and population, the International RiverFoundation (IRF) is proud to embody a positive, encouraging and action-oriented approach to managing our water resources. We foster innovative solutions, we celebrate the successes and we strive to achieve more for the environment, ecosystems and humanity.

We work to achieve our vision through three core pillars of leadership, celebration and collaboration. In 2018, these pillars were reviewed and refreshed to better reflect our direction and our unique offering within the water sector.

Under our leadership pillar, we are proud to support and champion future leaders and early career professionals to develop their knowledge, skills, and experiences, equipping them with the tools to forge meaningful careers within the water sector and make a real difference. In 2018 we ran our 4th Emerging Water Professionals Program, and awarded two Emerging River Professional Awards, four Ken Thiess Scholarships and two Vera Thiess Fellowships for Women working in the field of water. The calibre of all our participants and award recipients continues to impress us all and offers an exciting glimpse into the potential future of water management globally.

This year, we also launched our *RiverPatrons* program, building a passionate and respected group of established leaders all whom support the restoration, protection, and resilience of our rivers and help to champion our cause. We are honoured to have the Lord Mayor of Brisbane as our first Riverpatron and look forward to welcoming many more members to our exclusive group.

Our newly formed IRF Alumni Network, consisting of winners and finalists from the Thiess International Riverprize (by the Bert and Vera Thiess Foundation), has reached a new level of sophistication in 2018, proactively collaborating to provide valuable services to our greater international community.

Through celebration, we continue to recognise and

reward individuals and organisations who have achieved remarkable outcomes for rivers, basins and communities. 2018 saw the launch of the Bert and Vera Thiess Australasia Riverprize and The Australian Water Partnership Asia Riverprize. Both prizes were awarded during the 21st International Riversymposium (IRS), held for the first time in Sydney, and our deserving winners from New Zealand and the Philippines are fantastic examples of unwavering determination, dedication and passion.

As always, this year's Riversymposium was our major celebration of the year, bringing water professionals from all walks of life together to share and celebrate individual and collective successes. We introduced a series of new and interactive - Learn Inspire Transform (LIT) sessions - which were a successful and popular addition to the program and will again be incorporated into the 22nd IRS in Brisbane.

Collaboration is central to achieving our vision. We embrace this by partnering with organisations directly and enabling mutually beneficial partnerships between others. We are proud of our ongoing project with OceanaGold Philippines, which continues to improve Integrated River Basin Management in the Addalam River Basin. Moreover, our new and established Twinning programs, including our partnership with the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network ((IW:LEARN) are a testament to our commitment to help share river knowledge globally.

To all of our sponsors, donors and partners, we thank you for your contributions in 2018. Because of you, we can continue to run our life-changing programs to achieve resilient rivers - rivers for future generations. We also acknowledge the tremendous support from the Bert and Vera Thiess Foundation, the Brisbane City Council, Martin Albrecht AO, Thiess Pty Ltd, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and our many Riversymposium partners and sponsors. We cannot thank you enough for your support and belief in our vision. Special thanks also go to our passionate Board of directors, staff and supporters.

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



400+

Delegates



160

Countries around the World reached through communication channels



16,000+

People in the IRF network



30,000+

Visits to the Riversymposium website annually



Local and international media exposure



2018 The 21st International Riversymposium was held in Sydney, Australia. A new benchmark was set in terms of the quality of speakers and content of program, including the introduction of thematic Learn-Inspire-Transform (LIT) sessions, which had a greater emphasis on learning and development and provided training and capacity-building opportunities for delegates.

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.



Collaboration

Twinning

This financial year saw the completion of two Australian Government Twinning Projects: Oxley Creek and 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.

Completed projects:

[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 brings together community, catchment, land management and similar groups from across the Bremer River Catchment and assists 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

International projects:

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

Established in 2003, this Twinning project is our longest running and is often touted as the most inspiring. To quote Dr Natalie Baker, IRF 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 to increase access to safe water and sanitation, improve community and environmental health for Kenyan families, and strengthen bonds of friendship with the Tweed community. The project has resulted in the installation of small scale water purification stations and given significant attention to water supply, community capacity building and environmental health initiatives. 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

In this Twinning project, the Willamette team initially focused on increasing awareness and gaining understanding of watershed management through education programs. After strengthening multi-stakeholder participation, diverse sources of financial, technical and administrative support were put into place and pilot projects implemented to demonstrate improvements.

This Twinning project is now in its final stages, with stakeholder forums being held for reflection, discussion and learning so that watershed protection and restoration continues into the future.

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

As winner of the Thiess International Riverprize in 2013, the Mara River has 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 that are being addressed include increasing strategies for improving river basin management, water quality and quantity, reducing catchment degradation and sourcing finances.

Australian project:

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

The partnership between the Sunshine Coast River Initiative and Capricornia Catchments 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, this waterway requires special attention as it has a direct impact on a section of the Great Barrier Reef. Project planning has been completed and work will commence in 2018.



Collaboration

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

In 2017, the Bremer River Network was officially launched. Since its inception, the Network has built considerable momentum, with significant growth in numbers, activity, and productivity in the catchment. Through the Network's key communication channels; their Facebook page, website, quarterly newsletter and the Bremer River Blog; the Network has been the collective voice for the environment-focussed groups in the catchment. The Network has also promoted its member groups' hard work and efforts through 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, has connected volunteers with environment groups in the catchment and helped establish a Bushcare site in North Ipswich.



Recognition

2018 Riverprize Winners

Australasia Riverprize

Winner: Whangawehi Catchment Management Group, Whangawehi Stream, New Zealand

The Whangawehi stream is continually at risk of faecal contamination from stock and sedimentation from farmland, and has suffered from a lack of riparian habitats for bird and fish life. Under a community led catchment management plan, the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group (WCMG) has been helping farmers manage pests and revegetate river margins, resulting in the establishment of 160,000 native trees, 60 ha of riparian margins and the retirement of 10 ha of native bush block. Monitoring has revealed a 95% survival rate of plants, an increase in bird life and a 15% improvement in water quality. Once nearly extinct, the whitebait population is now abundant and the endangered long fin eel has grown to healthy populations.

Finalists:

Laidley Creek, Queensland, Australia; Parramatta River, NSW, Australia



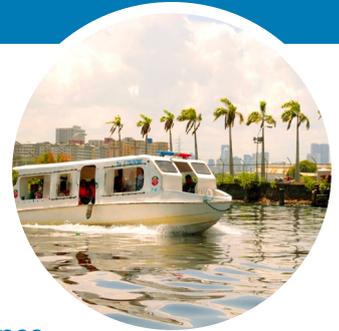
Asia Riverprize

Winner: Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, Pasig River, Manila, Philippines

The Pasig River was declared biologically dead in the 1990s due to persistent pollution caused by population growth and industrial development along its riverbanks. River restoration and management efforts by the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) and its partners have addressed easement recovery, riverbank development, waste and water quality management, and effectively brought the Pasig River back to life.

Finalists:

Yangtze River, China, Asia Development Bank



Emerging River Professional Award

2018

Winner: José Fernández (Peru)

José Fernández gained a degree in Forestry Engineering in 2015. He began lecturing to undergraduate students about the application of geographic information systems before taking on the position of Environmental Specialist for the Water Fund for Lima and Callao (AQUAFONDO).

Finalists:

Julie Francis (Australia)
Nantale Nsibirwa (South Africa)

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)

Education

Vera Thies Fellowship for Women

The Vera Thies 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 Thies, a long-time supporter of the IRF, the Fellowship recognises Vera's and the Thies 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: Charity Mundava (Zimbabwe)

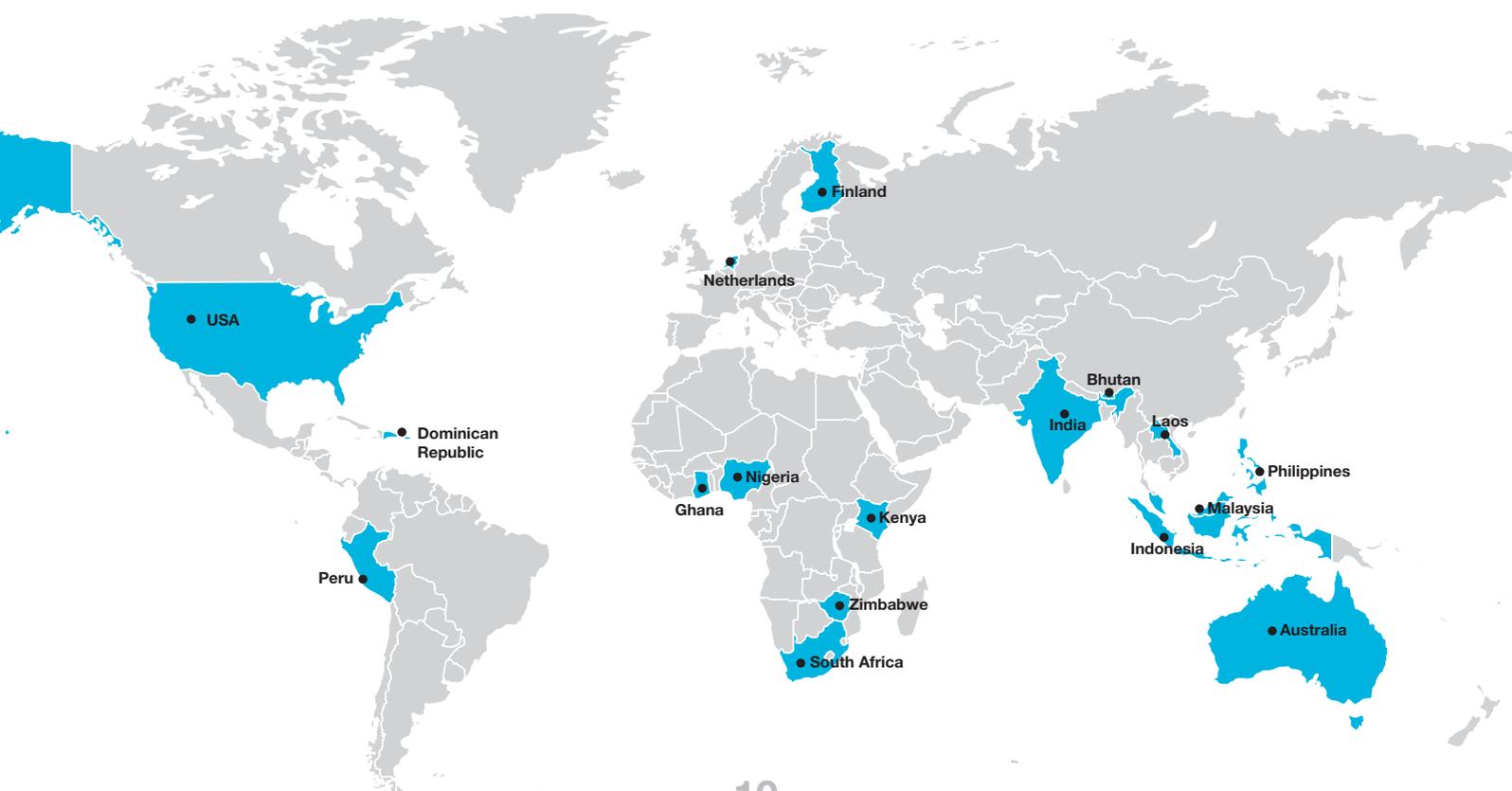
Charity has a PhD in spatial science and is passionate about the sustainable management of our planet. She works at WaterNSW as a spatial scientist in the water industry providing advice for projects relating to water quality and catchment management.

2018 Fellow: Carmina Rivera (Philippines)

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.

2017 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.



Ken Thiess Memorial Scholarship

2018 scholarship recipients:

Luisa Arredondo (Panama)
Jamyang Namgyei (Bhutan)

2017 scholarship recipients:

Camaria Holder (Antigua and Barbuda)
Rej Bungabong (Philippines)



The Emerging Water Professionals Program

The Emerging Water Professionals Program (EWPP) has grown significantly and is becoming well known among the global 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 is designed to hone the skills of emerging water professionals through various activities such as networking, presenting, leading activities and hearing the stories of senior professionals in water and development.

Emerging Water Professional, 2018

^ 2018 Emerging Water Professionals at the 21st International Rivers Symposium

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
- Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) 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 non-government 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.



ACFID
MEMBER



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

IRF staff & Board

Staff

Staff member	2017	2018
Eva Abal CEO		
Danielle Andlemac Bremer River Project Officer		
Ian Atkinson CEO		
Natalie Baker* Riversymposium Manager		
Abdula Bansuan Project Coordinator, Philippines		
Kathy Chaston-Radway Program Manager		
Patricia Dalby Communications Manager		
Tara Davis Alumni Coordinator		
John Hayes Accountant		
Sylvia Liu Communications Officer		
Carla Littlejohn Program Manager		
Kelly McMillan Events Coordinator		
Vanh Mixap EWPP Coordinator		
Carmina Rivera Project Officer		
Chris Skelton Financial Advisor		
Charlotte Spliethoff Program Manager		
Jacob Watt Assistant Accountant		
Internship / work experience	2017	2018
Shannon Chang		
Junjie Chen		
Chia Ching		

* Supported by Brisbane City Council

Board

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

Financial

Financial year	2016	2017	2018
Income	\$1,988,310	\$1,714,838	\$1,203,811
Expenses	\$1,856,391	\$1,564,585	\$1,340,934
Assets	\$1,022,900	\$700,586	\$408,314
Liabilities	\$1,056,428	\$475,604	\$320,455

As a not-for-profit organisation, IRF benefits from sponsorships and donations to implement its activities. During the year, the Foundation has undertaken a range of actions to secure ongoing funding in order to realise its business plan. It has implemented strategic initiatives to maintain sufficient income combined with reduced costs so that a positive equity position can be attained and maintained in future years.

Major income-generating activities during the 2018 financial year were:

- \$255,000 - Commonwealth, States and local government, including Brisbane City Council
- \$233,000 - philanthropic patrons, including the Bert and Vera Thies Foundation
- \$469,000 - *Riversymposiums* 2017 and 2018
- \$208,000 - monetary and non-monetary from International and Australian Business and Australian Universities, including Thies Ltd, OceanaGold, PKF Hackett.

Major expenditure outlays during the 2018 financial year were:

- \$200,000 - Bert and Vera Thies International Riverprize
- \$87,000 - Ken Thies Scholarships and Vera Thies Fellowships
- \$62,000 - International Twinning projects sponsored by Tweed-Kenya, Australian Government and Bert and Vera Thies Foundation
- \$36,000 – OceanaGold project in the Philippines
- \$35,000 – Bremer River project sponsored by the Ipswich City Council and Queensland Government.

There was a positive equity for the year of \$87,800 with a loss of \$137,000.

For the full Financial Audited Report please visit the International Riverfoundation website at:

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

or find us on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission website.

Sponsors

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BRONZE SPONSOR



DIVERSITY IN WATER SPONSOR



LIT SESSION SPONSORS



EXHIBITOR SPONSOR



STUDY TOUR SPONSOR



ERPA SPONSOR



KEYNOTE SPONSOR



