

21st International
RIVER
SYMPOSIUM
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

A REPORT TO OUR PARTNERS



"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*



Thank you

The International Riversymposium is an opportunity for anybody interested in river management, to be inspired by Riverprize winners, keynotes and presenters; to learn from allied professionals and enhance our skills to restore, protect and build more resilient rivers.

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

We are proud of the longevity and commitment of 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 for the symposium and for recognising the positive impact our event has on its attendees. You are the enablers of this event.

The UNSW Global Water Institute, joined us this year as a Gold Partner – 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 sold-out event.

To sponsors of our new Learn-Inspire-Transform sessions, thank you for your support to enable these new interactive sessions. The feedback confirmed these sessions will continue.

To our Riverprize donors, you helped us deliver the world's most prestigious environmental prize – Riverprize. With your generosity we were able to award two new regional prizes, the Australian Water Partnership Asia Riverprize and the Bert and Vera Thiess Australasia Riverprize.

And to our ever growing global group of dedicated volunteers: members of our Strategic Planning and Organising Committees, Asia and Australasia Riverprize Judges, Emerging River Professional Judges, and onsite event volunteers - we thank you all wholeheartedly for your contribution.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you next year in Brisbane for a Resilient Rivers - themed Riversymposium!



Dr Eva Abal

CEO, International RiverFoundation

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FAST FACTS

349

TOTAL DELEGATES

26

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

5

DAYS

2

RIVERPRIZES
AWARDED

42

EMERGING WATER
PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

19

SPONSORED
DELEGATES

4

KEYNOTE
SPEAKERS

15

LEARN-INSPIRE-TRANSFORM
SESSIONS

3

STUDY TOURS

What is Riversymposium?



The concept of an international river forum was inspired by a two-day event held on Brisbane's waterway issues in 1998. For twelve years, *Riversymposium* was an integral part of the RiverFestival a 10-day event held each September with a broad cultural focus incorporating art, environmental science and sport underpinned by a strong sustainability message.

The *Riversymposium* was held in Brisbane every year until 2010, when it was held in Perth, Western Australia. Since then, it has alternated between Brisbane and another city.

The International *Riversymposium* links business to science, policy and communities. We connect businesses, 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.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

REGIONAL RIVERPRIZES

- *Asia Riverprize*, generously supported by the Australian Water Partnership. Congratulations to the **Pasig River in the Philippines**, for winning the inaugural Asia Riverprize.
- *Australasia Riverprize*, generously supported by the Bert and Vera Theiss Foundation. Congratulations to the **Whangawehi Stream in New Zealand**.



AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- *Emerging River Professional Award*, made possible with support from OceanaGold to recognise and reward early career river professionals. **José Fernández** from Peru won this year's award.
- *The Vera Thies Fellowship for Women* was awarded to **Charity Mundava** from Zimbabwe and **Carmina Rivera** from the Philippines, who both demonstrated a passion for advancing women's participation in river management.



DIVERSITY IN WATER

- Sponsored by the Australian Water Partnership, this session hosted a [panel of speakers](#) and inspired the audience to embrace diversity to advance river basin management.
- This event allowed for a frank and fearless discussion and delved into the [need for diversity](#) of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability to be embraced

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- [Professor Rebekah Brown](#), Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Australia
- [Dr. Ir. Khin. Ni Ni Thien](#), National Water Resources Committee, Myanmar
- [Wouter T. Lincklaen Arriëns](#), Transformation First Asia, Singapore
- [Professor William \(Bill\) Dennison](#), University of Maryland Centre for Environmental Science, United States



STUDY TOURS

- [Tomago Wetland Tour](#) - a day trip out to the restored Tomago Wetlands site
- Our Living River - Making the [Parramatta River](#) Swimmable again, a tour of the Parramatta River in Sydney
- Guided walk of water sensitive urban design in [Annandale, Sydney](#)

Learning - Inspiring - Transforming

In 2018, we introduced a new program feature: Learn-Inspire-Transform (LIT) sessions, designed for solutions-focussed learning and capacity building opportunities for delegates.

This year's LIT sessions included:

- Achieving Sustainable Development Goal Six: Targeting nexus (DFAT)
- International RiverFoundation Alumni (IRF, Invitation only)
- How much is a river worth to a city? (Sydney Water)
- Mapping of Indigenous and cultural values of water and river systems: Examples from the Murray-Darling and Lake Eyre Basins
- 2018 Emerging River Professional Award finalists (IRF)
- Establishing and maintaining Riverprize twinning partnerships: Recipes for success (IRF)
- GEF: IW Learn Twinning Exchange (IRF, Invitation only)
- Water and SDG interactions: Creating a positive-sum game (CSIRO)
- Co-designed pathways to deliver integrated catchment and flood solutions (Suncorp and Water Technology)
- 2018 Riverprize finalists (IRF)
- Achieving river resilience for future generations (South-east Queensland Council of Mayors)
- SDG 6: Implementing the targets (UNSW Global Water Institute and PLS Alliance)
- Taking the urban river plunge: How we are making the Parramatta River swimmable again? (Parramatta River Catchment Group)
- River City economies (Brisbane City Council)
- Inclusive approaches to integrate knowledge streams, build environmental intelligence and engage stakeholders (UMCES)



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



WATER TECHNOLOGY
WATER, COASTAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

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Council of Mayors
South East Queensland



SUNCORP



**Parramatta River
Catchment Group**



University of Maryland
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

PLUS ALLIANCE
PHOENIX | LONDON | SYDNEY

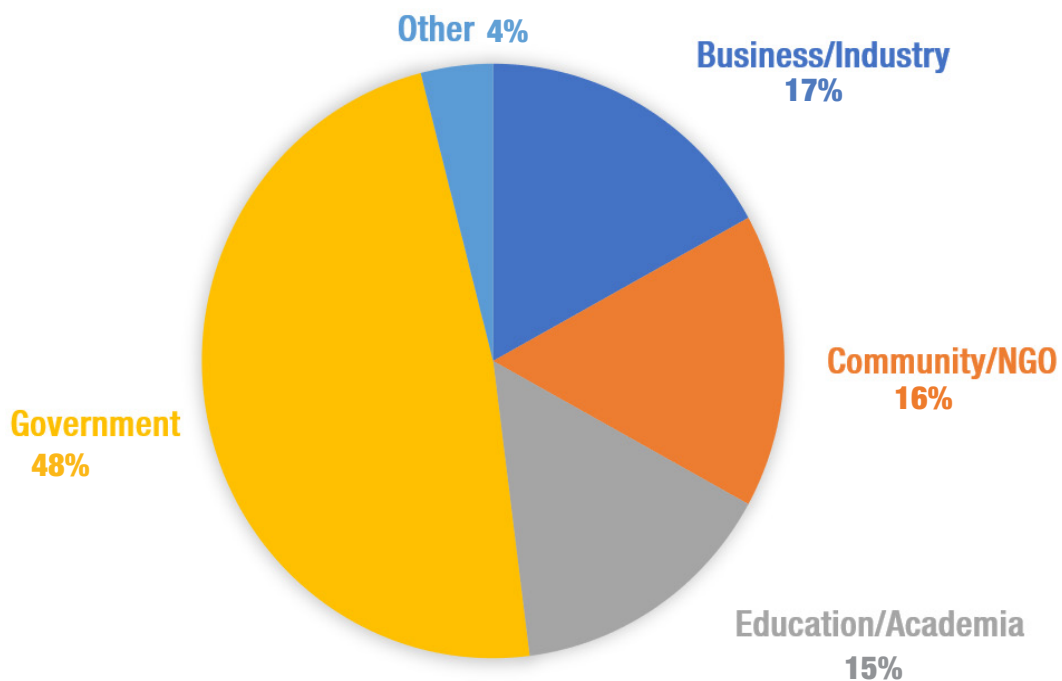
Who attended?

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19
SPONSORED
DELEGATES

SECTOR REPRESENTATION



EMERGING WATER PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

To foster future leaders, this program runs concurrently to *Riversymposium*. Forty-two emerging professionals undertook activities to promote interdisciplinary and cross generational collaboration.

SPONSORED DELGATES

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 *Riversymposium*. For the past five years, DFAT has sponsored over 325 delegates to attend. This year delegates from Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Indonesia and India were funded.

Our Global Outreach & Influence



15,409
minutes viewed

7481
FOLLOWERS



27.1K
impressions

961
FOLLOWERS



3,775
impressions

630
FOLLOWERS



Testimonials

"I really enjoyed the keynote given by Prof Rebekah Brown. She focuses on urban informal settlements which is closely related to our own life. Polluted water and inadequate sanitation could cause diseases. Similar situations are also found in China's fast-growing rural areas. To solve the problem, she is leading a global research program named Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE). Prof Brown introduced the concept and progress of RISE during the talk. By working with governments, communities, and local leaders, they are taking solutions for informal settlements, and committing to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable people."

Mz Junzhe Fu, Yunnan Institute of Environmental Science, China

"The symposium provided a main avenue through which the professionals in developing countries could have access to research and on-ground practices pertaining to river and watershed management and contribute to the necessary policy and practice dialogue around rivers in Asia, Australia and globally. I was especially pleased with the learn- inspire and transform sessions. They were a good platform for knowledge and lesson learned sharing and for a deliberative engagement among the members of the community of practices."

Dr Sokhem Pech, CAVAC Program, Cambodia

I recall the very first Riversymposium held in Brisbane in 1998 way back when I was still a student studying the very river system that is the namesake of the annual conference. Since those days much has changed for the conference.... all for the better. The conference has grown in size and stature and is now truly an "international" symposium, having been held overseas and attracting delegates from all round the world."

Simon Costanzo, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. United States



Our Partners

PLATINUM SPONSOR



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GOLD SPONSORS



Dedicated to a better Brisbane



Global Water
Institute

BRONZE SPONSOR



DIVERSITY IN WATER SPONSOR



LIT SESSION SPONSORS



Council of Mayors
South East Queensland



EXHIBITOR SPONSOR



STUDY TOUR SPONSOR



ERPA SPONSOR



KEYNOTE SPONSOR



Making it happen

In 2018 a Strategic Planning Committee was established to provide long-term guidance, advice and input to the *Riversymposium*. The Strategic Planning Committee is currently chaired by the IRF CEO and made up of IRF Board members, long-term, high-value sponsors, IRF staff, and other experts in the rivers sector nationally and globally. The Strategic Planning Committee is primarily responsible for providing recommendations on the major long-term decisions pertaining to the *symposium* such as event locations, major themes, and financial models.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

NAME	ORGANISATION/AFFILIATION
Dr Eva Abal (Chair)	CEO International RiverFoundation
Dr Natalie Baker	International RiverFoundation and Brisbane City Council
Dr Selina Ward	IRF Board
Prof Bill Dennison	IRF Board
Dr Marian Neal	Australian Water Partnership
Mr John McCarthy AO	IRF Board
Mr Thomas Panella	Asia Development Bank
Prof Stuart Bunn	Griffith University

The Organising Committee was responsible for providing input, advice and assistance with many aspects of the program and event logistics. Chaired by the *Riversymposium* Manager, the Organising Committee met via teleconference four times, and assisted with nominating keynote speakers, advice on topics and program structure, introductions to / suggestions of potential sponsors, recruitment of volunteers, event marketing

The decision to include major sponsors representatives and Sydney locals on the Organising Committee was beneficial. Many program committee members continued on in 2018 and some will continue in 2019 also.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

NAME	ORGANISATION/AFFILIATION
Dr Eva Abal	CEO International RiverFoundation
Dr Natalie Baker (Chair)	International RiverFoundation and Brisbane City Council
Prof Angela Arthington	IRF specialist advisor
Sarah Clift	Parramatta River Catchment Group Coordinator
Dr Andrew Dansie	Program Manager, UNSW Global Water Institute
Carla Littlejohn	International RiverFoundation
Vanh Mixap	Clearwater
Brian McIntosh	International WaterCentre
Russell Rollason	DFAT

A big thank you as well to our *Riverprize* and ERPA judges, chaired by Dr. Deb Nias, for their continued support of these key programs and the *Riversymposium*, and for ensuring that the prizes are awarded correctly and accordingly.

The IRS Journey



Future programs/ opportunities

2019

International Riversymposium

BRISBANE

- Theme: Resilient Rivers
- Emerging River Leader Award
- Vera Thiess Fellowship
- 2019 Thiess International Riverprize
- Brisbane RiverFestival
- LIT Sessions

2020

International Riversymposium

HOST CITY IN CHINA TO BE CONFIRMED

- Emerging River Leader Award
- Vera Thiess Fellowship
- Regional Riverprize/s

2021

International Riversymposium

BRISBANE

- Theme TBC
- Emerging River Leader Award
- Brisbane RiverFestival
- 21st Thiess International Riverprize
- Vera Thiess Fellowship

2022

International Riversymposium

EUROPE, TO BE CONFIRMED

- LIT Sessions
- International location for IRS announced
- Regional Riverprize/s
- Vera Thiess Fellowship
- Emerging River Leader Award

2023

International Riversymposium

BRISBANE

- LIT Sessions
- Emerging River Leader Award
- Brisbane RiverFestival
- 22nd Thiess International Riverprize
- Vera Thiess Fellowship

2024

International Riversymposium

LOCATION TO BE CONFIRMED IN THE YEAR HELD

- LIT Sessions
- Regional Riverprize/s