# 24th International REPORTER SYNPOSIUM

**EXCELLENCE – COLLABORATION – INTEGRATION** 

A REPORT TO OUR PARTNERS

# 28-30 September 2021 BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Recovery to Resilience: Leveraging Partnerships HYBRID

MANAGED BY:



INTERNATIONAL RiverFoundation

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# **THANK YOU!**

Following on from our first ever virtual International Riversymposium last year, the 24<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium (IRS) was held as a hybrid event for the first time! The whole world continued to be our venue for this event – our boundaries to share and learn from each other ceased to exist.

2021 saw the effects of the global pandemic and climate change posing more challenges on our rivers and waterways. The COVID pandemic has and is continuing to change the world – causing significant interruptions to our traditional activities and the way we go about with our lives. The pandemic has allowed us to reflect and look at opportunities to remain connected, and work together to have a future where healthy, resilient rivers support thriving communities, ecosystems and economies.

# Thank you to our passionate partners and supporters, for helping make the first ever hybrid Riversymposium a success!

Together with our digital partners, Iconic Live and our venue partners, The University of Queensland (UQ), we continued to provide a unique global forum for river champions across the academic/research, government, business and community sectors to share knowledge and experiences. Delegates were provided with the option to attend either in person at the Brisbane venue, or online using our digital platform.

We are proud of the longevity and commitment of the Riversymposium's Platinum Partner, Brisbane City Council (BCC); our Gold Partners, Australian Water Partnership (AWP) and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); as well as the support of our silver partner, Queensland Government Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water.

In line with the theme, the 1000+ Resilient Rivers Campaign was launched, with the recognition of the Brisbane River as the inaugural member of the Collective. An exciting campaign for the resilience of our world's rivers and waterways, 1000+ Resilient Rivers encourages and recognises river basins and their communities to proceed along their journey towards river resilience.

This year, with BCC, we introduced a new type of special session – River*Pitch* which enabled river managers and communities to showcase their respective visions for 2031 and identify potential investors or partners for the work they are doing or planning to do to get our waterways "fit" for the Brisbane Olympics 2032. We also welcome returning and new partners for the very popular Learn-Inspire-transform (LIT) and the new River Co-*Lab* sessions.

In partnership with Alluvium, we welcomed in-person delegates during a networking function held at the amazing UQ Art Museum. The Diversity in Water event sponsored by AWP was a great way to share insights around the theme of Diversity – *Resilience in the time of COVID*. Exciting oral/video presentations showcased the great work that are being done in rivers and waterways around the world.

Riversymposium is more than just a meeting of great minds and sharing knowledge – it is also about celebrating our passion for giving our rivers a voice and the great work we do to achieve healthy and resilient rivers. This year, the 21<sup>st</sup> International River*prize*, the world's most prestigious prize for excellence in river basin management, was awarded to the Thwake River at Makueni County in Kenya during the Celebrating Resilience Gala Dinner. Due to COVID restrictions, the awarding of the prize was live-streamed on social media, with a recorded acceptance of the prize by the winners shared during the dinner as well as to other symposium delegates through the IRF website.

One of the highlights of a hybrid Riversymposium is the content creation process that is cognizant of both in-person and online delegate experiences. We acknowledge our keynotes, panellists, facilitators and presenters for embracing the hybrid process and ensuring that both our face-to-face and virtual delegates are involved. We are grateful to all of you for being part of the hybrid journey with us. We acknowledge your invaluable contributions, knowledge, insights, as well as patience as we navigated the logistics of our very first hybrid Riversymposium.

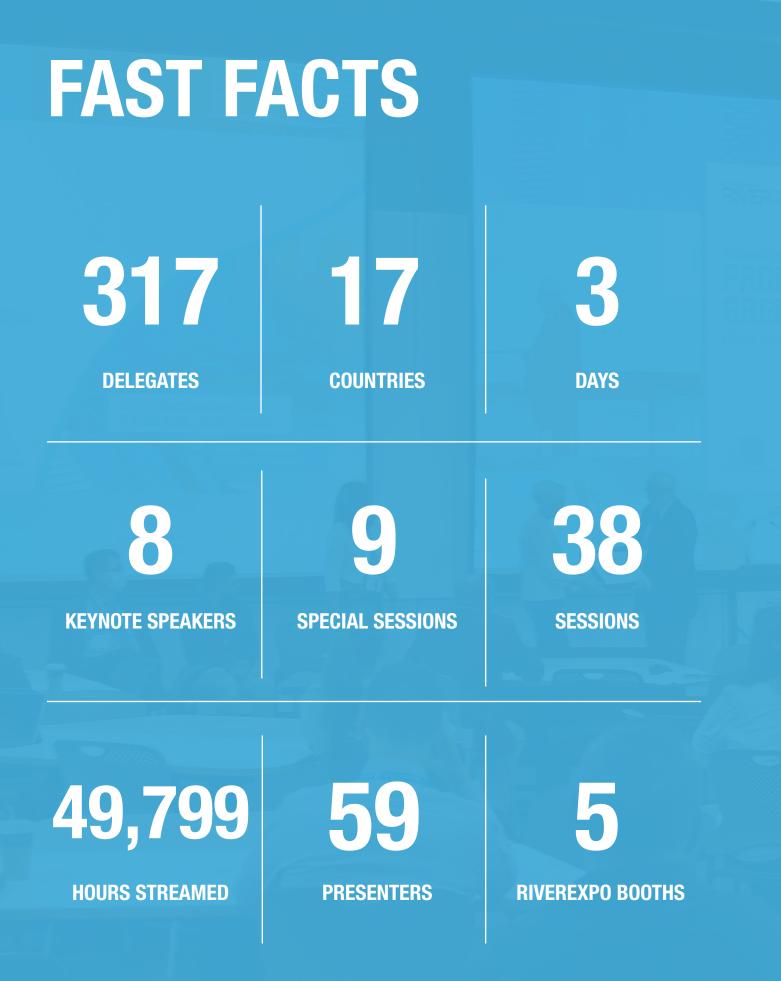
On behalf of the IRF Board and staff, Thank you! We look forward to meeting you all at the 25<sup>th</sup> International Rivers*ymposium* which will be held in Vienna, Austria - as well as live-streamed as a hybrid event.



**Dr Eva Abal** CEO, International RiverFoundation Convenor, 24<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium



**Prof. Paul F Greenfield** Chairman, International RiverFoundation



# WHAT IS RIVER*SYMPOSIUM*?

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

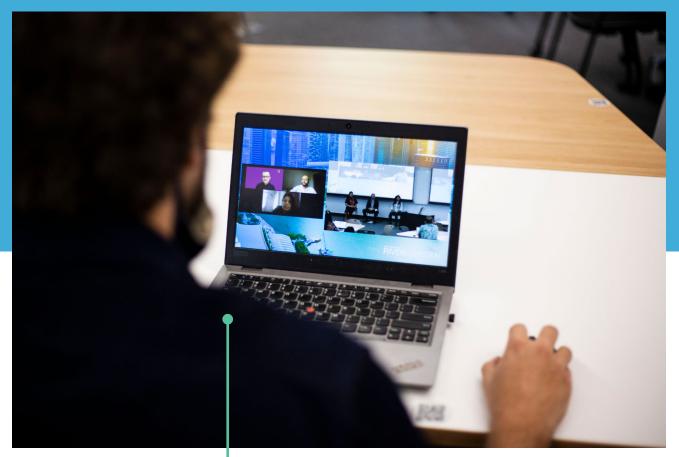
Hosted by the International RiverFoundation, the International Riversymposium was first held in Brisbane in 1998 and provides a platform for river managers, policy developers, scientists, consultants, NGOs and community organisations to share knowledge and innovative ideas on all aspects of river and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

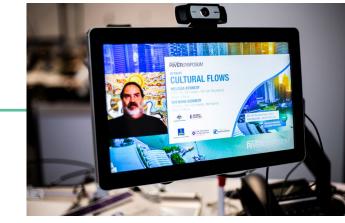
By facilitating partnerships between key stakeholders, the International Riversymposium celebrates the environmental, economic and social value of rivers across the globe. The symposium provides an international forum for examining best practice in river and watershed management.

Over the years, the International Riversymposium has hosted thousands of delegates from all over the world. Whether through the River*Expo*, plenary sessions, or the River*prize* Gala Dinner and social program, Riversymposium provides the opportunity to network with river and water management experts on a global scale.

# **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





# HYBRID CONFERENCE

The COVID pandemic has impacted our lives on a global scale. Many of us continue to adapt to the transformational effects of the pandemic and are exploring alternative methods and opportunities to staying connected and working together.

For the first time in the history of the conference, the 24<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium was held as a hybrid event as we continue to deliver an engaging experience to our online audiences and in-person attendees.

This year we continued our partnership with Iconic Live who provided their Delegate Connect platform. With this partnership, we were able to livestream the event to our online audiences, bring in online speakers to our in-person audiences and provide interactivity between our online and in-person audiences.

Moving forward, hybrid technologies will became an essential tool for sharing, collaborating and connecting with each other at the International Riversymposium.





# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The 24<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium presented a diverse program including keynote speakers, special sessions, panel discussions, networking events and speakers from an array of background and countries. There are too many exciting and innovative talks, ideas and products from this year's symposium to share, however, we have pulled out some highlights. This includes announcing the 1000+ Resilient Rivers Campaign, Diversity in Water, the Emerging Water Professionals program, the Port of Brisbane Study Tour, the Welcome Function and more excitingly, the awarding of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Riverprize.



# THE 1000+ RESILIENT RIVERS COLLECTIVE

To open this year's Riversymposium, the International **RiverFoundation announced** the exciting new campaign for 1000+ Resilient Rivers. Brisbane River was recognised as the inaugural member of the 1000+ Resilient Rivers Collective. We look forward to more rivers and waterways starting their Resilience journeys. Becoming part of the 1000+ Resilient Rivers Collective recognises that the river, after having undergone a self-assessment process and workshop, is on its journey to resilience.



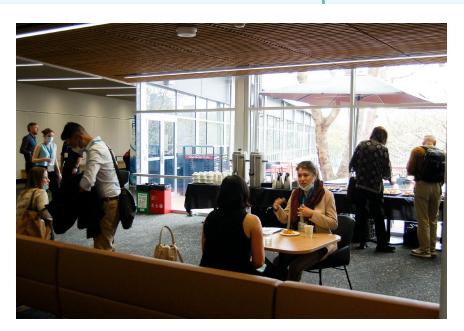
# DIVERSITY IN WATER: RESILIENCE IN THE TIME OF COVID

As a networking event, Diversity in Water explored questions around how diversity has emerged as a key element to help adaptation and resilience in water throughout the time of the pandemic, where women, young girls, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups have been most affected. This event was delivered in partnership with the Australian Water Partnership, and continued to be a favourite among our delegates.



# EMERGING WATER PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

The Emerging Water Professionals Program fosters education and innovation in water management by supporting the professional and personal development of future water leaders. In partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trading, 15 students were sponsored to attend the Internatonal Riversymposium and a special mentoring panel was held to share knowledge and stories with this year's Emerging Water Professionals cohort.



# PORT OF BRISBANE STUDY TOUR

The Port of Brisbane hosted a study tour where delegates were able to learn about the various operations and environmental management in place with a focus on the river and subsequent ecological values in and around the port. As the third largest and one of the most diverse multi-cargo ports in the country, the Port of Brisbane is committed to working in partnership with its customers and communities in its aim to explore more ways to operate more sustainably.



# **WELCOME FUNCTION**

In partnership with Alluvium Consulting, in-person delegates were welcomed to the 24<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium in a beautiful venue of the UQ Art Museum. The theme of the symposium. "Recovery to Resilience: leveraging partnerships" recognises the urgent need to build the capacity of our rivers, communities and industries to quickly recover from extreme events, such as droughts and floods, and return to a healthy state, ensuring social and economic prosperity. The networking event offered delegates the chance to connect and unwind after the first day.





# THE THIESS INTERNATIONAL RIVERPRIZE

The Thiess International River*prize*, the world's most prestigious environmental award, has been awarded since 1999. The award is generously supported by the Bert & Vera Thiess Foundation as a legacy and recognition of the long-term efforts of the late Bert and Vera Thiess and the Thiess Company to encourage the sustainable management of the world's rivers. The Thiess International River*prize* aims to inspire the acceleration towards resilient rivers. IRF encourages prize winners to think of concepts of future "bankable" or investment-ready projects to achieve the resilience of their rivers and communities. Bankable projects can provide effective solutions to meet the vision of resilience for our rivers.

This year, for the 21st International Riverprize, we were fortunate to receive applications from a number

of dedicated organisations, all around the globe. Each and every one of our applicants are conducting important work to ensure the resilience of their local rivers and communities.

This year's judging panel was comprised of a group of independent experts, each with a diverse area of knowledge and expertise. A special thanks to our judging panel for taking the time to review each application and carefully analyse every project against detailed marking criteria.

Applications were narrowed down to three finalists, and the winner was announced at the Celebrating Resilience Gala Dinner in Brisbane (and lived streamed via social media).

# FINALISTS



# **CHICAGO RIVER, USA**

Founded in 1979, Friends of the Chicago River act as strong advocates for the Chicago River through partnerships and policies. On ground work mobilizes staff, volunteers, and partners to pick up litter, conserve water usage, remove invasive plant species, and install native plants on river-edge lands. Planning staff focus on using nature-based solutions to overcome stormwater issues including combined sewer overflows and flooding to achieve resilience.



# **TWEED RIVER, AUSTRALIA**

The Tweed Shire Council collaborates with State government agencies, not-for-profit organisations, landholders and the community to manage key issues threatening the social/cultural/economic/ecological values of the Tweed Estuary. Incorporating an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan, the Tweed Shire Council oversees all restoration projects along the Tweed River. This includes water quality testing, saltmarsh and mangrove restoration and ensuring that recreational use of the river is done with little environmental impact.



# THWAKE RIVER, KENYA

The Africa Sand Dam Foundation (ASDF) was founded in 2010. ASDF's vision is to foster soil and water conservation in dry lands to change the lives of millions of community members. Their focus is on water conservation by harvesting and storing within seasonal river channels, through the construction of sand dams.

Since inception, Africa Sand Dam Foundation has operated with a community led development approach, implementing 530 sand dams of which 125 are within River Thwake and it's tributaries. This enables 795,000 community members to have access to water. At risk individuals in these communities would usually have to walk long distances (average 5 - 10 kilometers) to fetch water for use at their homes. The sand dams allow families to access clean drinking water within shorter distances (500 metres - 1 kilometers), greatly improving quality of life and safety.

# **JUDGING PANEL**

**Prof. Paul Greenfield**, IRF Chair and Chair of the 21<sup>st</sup> International River*prize* Judging Panel

**Prof Bill Dennison**, USA (University of Maryland) – ecosystem health and science communication

Wouter Lincklaen Arriens, Singapore/Philippines (TransformationFirst Asia) - leadership through transition

**Edith Kamundi**, Australia (Private Consultant/ University of Queensland) – WASH

**Oksana Tkachanko**, Australia (Lean Finance) – project impact/bankability

**Dr. Candra Samekto** –Afghanistan and Indonesia (International Fund for Agricultural Development) integrated river basin management

Dr Siti Aisha Abdulah – Malaysia (University of Terrenganu) - conservation and marine ecosystems



# **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

A diverse selection of keynote speakers at this years International Riversymposium shared their stories and experiences of managing waterways. This ranged from cultural connection to place, economic approaches, engineering solutions, community engagement and policy driven solutions. Our keynotes included both in-person and virtual speakers who we were able to live stream to our online platform and our in-perosn rooms. These inspirational speakers stirred up interesting conversations and topics which carried throughout the whole event.



NCEconomics

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28-30 September 2021 BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Recovery to Resilience: Leveraging Partnerships



# PROF HUGH POSSINGHAM

**Queensland Chief Scientist** 



# **DR SIWAN LOVETT**

**Director,** Australian River Restoration Centre



# **JIM BINNEY**

Director Natural Capital Economics, Alluvium



# **DR PAUL SATUR**

Lecturer for Water Sensitive Cities, Monash Sustainable Development Institute & Co-founder of Our Future Cities.



# MELISSA KENNEDY

**CEO** Tati Tati Kaiejin, Tati Tati Aboriginal Water Officer



# BRENDAN KENNEDY

Director – Tati Tati Kaiejin, Aboriginal Water Officer



# ANDREAS BECKMANN

Regional CEO, WWF Central and Eastern Europe



# **SOFIA KILIFI**

Sustainability and Community Manager, Coca Cola European Partners



# SPECIAL SESSIONS

At this years International Riversymposium, we held a number of different special sessions, in collaboration with our partners. This year we continued our popular Learn-Inspire-Transform sessions, but also introduced two sessions with our partners around key areas of interest. RiverPitch brought together river practitioners with investors and was a great opportunity to network within a group of skilled individuals. The sessions were all well attended and generated interesting and profound conversations that have continued after Riversymposium.





(i) Abstract Description

# PUTTING REPORT CARDS TO WORK

### Sponsored by: James River Association & University of Maryland Center for **Environmental Science**

This LIT presented an interactive workshop to share examples of groups that have utilized their report cards to catalyze meaningful actions.



# **THE JOURNEY TO RESILIENCE -BRISBANE RIVER**

### Sponsored by: Brisbane City Council

This session explored the results of the self-assessment tools as well as the strategy moving forward to see the Brisbane River fast track its journey towards resilience.



# CATCHMENT ACTION PLANS (CAPS) -THE LESSONS

### Sponsored by: SEQ Council of Mayors

During this session, John Howlie from the Council of Mayors discussed CAPs and how they were developed, as well as how have they been used, what has been their impact and how they guide the programs and projects to improve catchment resilience. The session also discussed the work Council of Mayors is doing in coordinating funding programs and projects through the Catchment Investment Program (CIP)



# LESSONS LEARNED FROM CHAMPIONS ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

# Sponsored by: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

This special mentoring panel brought together the expertise from across generations as a panel of six members from a variety of sectors and levels of experience shared their knowledge and stories with this year's Emerging Water Professionals cohort.



# A "GREEN AND GOLD" REVOLUTION FOR SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

### Sponsored by: Healthy Land and Water

In this workshop, Healthy Land an Water explored the state-of-the-art in regional monitoring, and collaborative and engaging approaches to natural resource management and working with traditional owners, the broader community, scientists and policymakers. In a creative session, participants imagined and described a range of potential futures for South East Queensland.



(i) Abstract Description

# THE SHOW MUST GO ON! THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY'S PIVOT TO A VIRTUAL WORLD OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### Sponsored by: **The San Antonio River Authority** In this presentation, viewers were introduced to the River Authority, an organization committed to safe, clean, and enjoyable creeks and rivers and how it achieves its mission and vision. Viewers then explored lessons learned from transforming an outdoor-based environmental education program into an engaging virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic.



# WATERWAY HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES: LEVERS, INCENTIVES AND MECHANISMS.

### Sponsored by: Brisbane City Council

This River*Pitch* was future-focused - set in 2031 one year before Brisbane hosts the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This panel discussion saw pitches and ideas for how we maximise the value of our river and bay as well as solutions to achieve these opportunities.



# 1000+ RESILIENT RIVERS COLLECTIVE - THE WHAT, THE WHY AND THE HOW

Sponsored by: International RiverFoundation

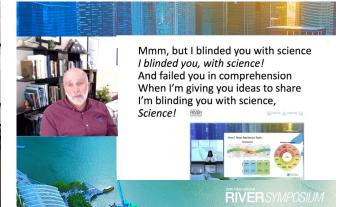
1000+ Resilient Rivers is the first public awareness campaign of the Resilient Rivers Blueprint. This expert panel held conversation with representatives from river basins around the world who have explored the assessment tools and been involved in the 1000+ Resilient Rivers campaign.



# CITY DESIGN, WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ARE HERE - *PERHAPS EARLIER AND WITH GREATER IMPACTS THAN ANY OF US ANTICIPATED*

### Sponsored by: ARUP

This co-*Lab* session explored themes and discussions around how the driving climate change imperative leads us to consider how we can accelerate and further coordinate efforts to create climate change resilience and sustainable cities.



# THE 21<sup>ST</sup> INTERNATIONAL RIVER*SYMPOSIUM* SONG

Prof Bill Dennison, IRF Director, presented the Customary IRF 2021 Song during the Closing Event.

Original Song: She Blinded me with Science by Thomas Dalby



# **WHO ATTENDED**

317

**DELEGATES** 

**ACADEMIA** 

20% 18% **BUSINESS** 

# **GOVERNMENT**



**NOT-FOR-PROFIT** 

17 **COUNTRIES** 



# **TESTIMONIALS**

# ß

I participated in the online version of the hybrid 24th International River Symposium. Although I was not able to participate in person, the sessions were relevant and enjoyable to listen to online and I participated in a breakout session using the chat function. I learnt a lot of useful information from the international perspective as well as the local. It was well organised and facilitators kept to time. The pre-recorded videos in the breaks were great."

### KAYLEEN CAMPBELL, CARBON NEUTRAL 2030 (CN30) COORDINATOR MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

# ß

For a first-timer to attend the IRS, it was quite an impressive event even though it was a hybrid one (congrats there as well for pulling that off). It was inspiring to see that many of the presentations were of positive efforts that are achieving concrete and substantial results for river health both here in Australia and around the world. This has given me several new ideas to bring back to the Burdekin in North Queensland, and includes developing better links with the Traditional Owner

groups along the river.

### JOHN CONNELL, NORTH QUEENSLAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL

# ß

We are pleased to be supporting this terrific event. Great to see so many familiar faces joining virtually and on-site at The University of Queensland in Brisbane, hosted by our partner the International RiverFoundation. The Opening Ceremony featured a powerful Welcome to Country by Ashley Rusk and a warm welcome by UQ Chancellor Peter Varghese,

## MICHAEL WILSON, CEO, THE AUSTRALIAN WATER PARTNERSHIP



I attended the Opening Session with the launch of the 1000+ Resilient Rivers online. It is good to hear about the new approach in Intergrated Water Resources Management. I Look forward to working with the International RiverFoundation.

### TIRTA SUTEDJO,

DEPUTY DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR FOR WATER SUPPLY, BAPPENAS (REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AGENCY).

# ßß

The first hybrid IRS blazed a trail for international and local participants to discuss how to make rivers resilient around the world. Awarding the International RiverPrize for progress made in a developing country was a highlight for me.

WOUTER LINCKLAEN ARRIENS, FOUNDER AND CEO, TRANSFORMATIONFIRST. ASIA PTE LTD

# **OUR PARTNERS**

# PLATINUM



### Dedicated to a better Brisbane



# **BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL**

Brisbane is Australia's River City and home to more than one million people. Brisbane City Council is committed to finding ways to meet the city's growing need for water, air and energy resources in a region prone to drought and floods. Brisbane. Clean, Green, Sustainable 2017-2031 highlights key sustainability achievements and future targets to ensure a cleaner, greener and more resilient city.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

For more than a century, The University of Queensland (UQ) has maintained a global reputation for delivering knowledge leadership for a better world.

The most prestigious and widely recognised rankings of world universities consistently place UQ among the world's top universities.

UQ has also won more national teaching awards than any other Australian university. This commitment to quality teaching empowers our 53,600 current students, who study across UQ's three campuses, to create positive change for society.

Our research has global impact, delivered by an interdisciplinary research community of more than 1500 researchers at our six faculties, eight research institutes and more than 100 research centres.

# GOLD



<sup>THE</sup> AUSTRALIAN WATER PARTNERSHIP

# THE AUSTRALIAN WATER PARTNERSHIP

AWP is an international cooperation initiative helping developing countries primarily in the Indo-Pacific region work towards the sustainable management of their water resources. We enable this by facilitating collaboration between governments, international organisations, and our partner network of more than 200 Australian public, non-government and private sector organisations to share Australia's world-class water expertise internationally.



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

# DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade promotes and protects Australia's international interests to support our security and prosperity. The department is delivering the government's development policy, Partnerships for Recovery, which has pivoted Australia's development program to focus on health security, stability and economic recovery, together with our partners.

# **SILVER**



# QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MANUFACTURING AND WATER

The Queensland Government Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water's role is to generate economic growth and jobs through competitive regional economies and make best use of our water resources by delivering sustainable, safe, secure and affordable water state-wide.

# **DIGITAL PARTNER**



# **DELEGATE CONNECT**

Delegate Connect has been making Iconic Experiences for clients across the globe since 2013. We have an expert team of event professionals with decades of cumulative experience in managing all aspects of the technical delivery.

# **RIVER CO-LAB**

ARUP





# ARUP

Arup is the creative force at the heart of many of the world's most prominent projects in the built environment and across industry. Working in more than 140 countries, the firm's designers, engineers, architects, planners, consultants, and technical specialists collaborate with clients on innovative projects of the highest quality and impact.

# **COUNCIL OF MAYORS**

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) Resilient Rivers Initiative recognises a collaborative approach to managing the catchments of SEQ is vital to the future economic, social and environmental health of the region whilst providing efficient, effective management of funding.

# **HEALTHY LAND AND WATER**

Healthy Land and Water is the peak environmental group for South East Queensland. As experts in research, monitoring, evaluation and project management, we deliver innovative and science-based solutions to challenges affecting our landscapes, waterways and biodiversity. We are dedicated to improving and protecting South East Queensland's environment for future generations.

# **LEARN-INSPIRE-TRANSFORM**





# **SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY**

The San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) was created by the 45th Texas Legislature on May 5, 1937 and reorganized in 1961 to plan, manage, and implement water-related programs and projects within the San Antonio River Basin. The State of Texas empowered the River Authority to preserve, protect, and manage the resources and the ecology of the San Antonio River and its tributaries. The River Authority is committed to safe, clean, and enjoyable creeks and rivers, and strives to harmonize the needs of people and nature through our stewardship of rivers and land.

# **JAMES RIVER ASSOCIATION**

The mission of the James River Association is to be a guardian of the James River. We provide a voice for the river and take action to promote conservation and responsible stewardship of its natural resources.



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

# **WELCOME FUNCTION**



# **ALLUVIUM**

Alluvium is a niche, employee-owned consulting company focused on the sustainable management of catchments, water resources and waterways. We work across all states and territories and a growing presence in the Asia Pacific region.

With over 120 people, Alluvium is now one of the largest provides of river health consulting services in Australia.

# **KEYNOTE**



### MURRAY-DARLING

# **MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY**



Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner giving the Closing Remarks and handing over the hosting of the International Riversymposium to the City of Vienna



Walter Kling, General Secretary of the International Association of Waterworks in the Danube Catchment, welcoming the delegates to IRS Vienna 2022

# WHAT'S NEXT?

# **CONTENT ACCESS**

All registered delegates receive twelve months access to all of Riversymposium's content. This includes all keynotes, panel discussions, presentations, River*Expo*, sponsorship page, River*Gallery*, and River*Films*.

The video-on-demand access for the next twelve months enables delegates to take the time to explore content that they may not have had the chance to see during the actual event.

# SEE YOU IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA FOR THE 25<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL RIVERSYMPOSIUM!