



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand Project Twin Streams chosen as finalist in International Thies Riverprize

A groundbreaking New Zealand river management project has been announced as a finalist in the prestigious AUD\$300,000 (EU\$189,000) International Thies Riverprize - the world's largest prize in its field.

Project Twin Streams, initiated by the Waitakere City Council, was chosen as a finalist for successfully addressing environmental issues through Community-Council partnerships.

The winners of the International Thies Riverprize will be announced at a special ceremony on Tuesday 4 September 2007 during the 10th International Riversymposium and Environmental Flows Conference in the city of Brisbane, Australia, from 3 to 6 September. The International Thies Riverprize is a partnership between the International Riverfoundation (IRF) and Riverfestival.

Waitakere Mayor Bob Harvey said the urban sustainability Project Twin Streams was undertaken to reinstate streams at the heart of the City's communities.

"Over time rapid urbanisation of Waitakere put pressure on natural resources and created conflict over changing land use in rural, coastal and wilderness areas. The quality of water in the City's streams and harbours was affected by unrestricted stock access, pollution, removal of riparian vegetation and increased surface runoff," Mr Harvey said.

"Launched in 2002, Project Twin Streams is the largest water management scheme undertaken by a local government in New Zealand. It has huge significance in terms of its demographic impact not only on the people living directly in the catchment but also on 1.2 million Aucklanders receiving their reticulated water supply from Waitakere," he said.

"After raising awareness of stream degradation, the multi-faceted project facilitated changes in residents' attitudes and behaviour to achieve sustainable water management practices. The Project integrated stormwater management with the restoration of 125 km of stream banks and the establishment of new cycle paths and walkways.

"As New Zealand's first formal eco city, Waitakere is absolutely thrilled to be chosen as an International Thies Riverprize finalist which is recognition for all the hard work put in by Council and the community."

Riversymposium Chair Professor Paul Greenfield said the Waitakere project exemplifies the spirit of the International Thies Riverprize.

"Many countries are facing a water crisis and now more than ever it is important for the International Thies Riverprize to reward and promote best practice water management. All people involved in Project Twin Streams should feel proud their efforts have been recognised in this way."

Three other government and community groups from Austria, China and Canada received recognition as finalists for the Australian prize for their work in tackling pollution, water quality, erosion and flooding.

More information on the International Thies Riverprize can be found at www.riversymposium.com.

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Additional information and images are available upon request.

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