

NSW Murray Wetlands project wins \$100,000 in National Thiess Riverprize

A groundbreaking river management project initiated by the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group (MWWG) has won the prestigious \$100,000 National Thiess Riverprize – the largest award in its field.

The Thiess Riverprize was announced at a special gala ceremony on Tuesday 4 September during the 10th International Riversymposium & Environmental Flows Conference in Brisbane.

NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group Chair Mr Howard Jones said the project demonstrated how regional communities can achieve success in managing waterways and catchments.

“Since the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group was established in 1992, it has successfully delivered 75,000 megalitres of water to more than 200 wetlands over 71,000 hectares in the Murray and Lower Murray-Darling catchments,” Mr Jones said.

“The group developed a number of grant schemes to provide individual landowners, community groups and Government agencies with financial assistance to manage and rehabilitate natural wetlands. On-ground works included fencing, revegetation and minor earthworks to rehabilitate privately owned and public wetlands.

“Our aim has been to develop and implement well researched, technically sound and community endorsed wetland management programs. Receiving the National Thiess Riverprize endorses our approach and verifies the importance of all landholders, irrigators and communities who played an active and vital role in environmental flow management.

“We are excited and privileged to receive the award and on behalf of all individuals and agencies involved in the project, I would like to thank Thiess, the International Riversymposium, the International Riverfoundation and judges for awarding us this honour.”

The group will use the prize money to continue managing and improving wetlands through on-ground works, education, community engagement and monitoring.

International Riversymposium Chair Professor Paul Greenfield said a total of \$3 million had been awarded to recipients of the National and International Thiess Riverprizes since it began in 1998.

“During the past nine years, 16 winners from a total of 50 finalists have been recognised for their exemplary efforts in river management,” Professor Greenfield said.

“As we move into a world of increasing complexity and uncertainty around water security I am convinced those who develop and refine the knowledge and approaches for protecting, restoring and sustainably managing river systems, will become our water heroes,” he said.

“They are the global vanguards who have remained committed for many years to maintaining and rebuilding the health of rivers world wide.”

The NSW MWWG was chosen over three other outstanding Australian finalists which included Lake Macquarie in NSW, the Maroochy River in south-east Queensland and a national River Recovery Programme run by Greening Australia.

The National Thiess Riverprize is a partnership between the International Riverfoundation and Riverfestival, an annual 10 day celebration of Brisbane’s river, people, culture and environment. The prize money is funded by the International Riverfoundation and the awards are managed by Riverfestival.

More information on the National Thiess Riverprize can be found at www.riversymposium.com.

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Interviews are available with NSW MWWG Senior Program Manager Dr Deborah Nias and NSW MWWG Chair Mr Howard Jones. Additional information and images are available upon request.

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