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MEDIA RELEASE



*Dedicated to a better Brisbane*

### Canberra student acknowledged for helping to save Australia's rivers

A PhD student from Canberra who revealed the importance of links between rivers and catchments to help landowners sustain our rivers is one of three young scientists recognised for improving the outlook of Australia's rivers.

Heather McGinness, a finalist in the 2007 Riversymposium Young Water Scientist Award (in partnership with GHD and Water Forum Cooperative Research Centres), joins two other young Australian scientists acknowledged for their innovation in water conservation and management.

Ms McGinness is in the running to win \$3000 and will present a paper outlining her project at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium & Environmental Flows Conference in Brisbane from 3 – 6 September, 2007.

Ms McGinness' research involved looking at the importance of environmental flows and maintaining the links between rivers and catchments which she believes reaches a compromise between managing human water consumption and good river health.

Ms McGinness studied river health and the relationship between the riverbank, countryside and nearby wetlands which all contribute to the overall quality of the river. Her research found landowners need to be aware of the links between the river, the land and connecting streams in order to best manage our waterways.

The two other finalists are Simon Linke from Brisbane who devised an interactive software package to manage critical freshwater rivers and Yaron Zinger from Melbourne who invented a mechanism to reduce the nitrogen levels of unhealthy rivers.

Riversymposium Chair Professor Paul Greenfield said the International Riversymposium is proud to recognise the innovation of the outstanding finalists.

"The judging panel was extremely impressed by the three groundbreaking research projects. They each demonstrated they possess the qualities we are looking for - good communication skills, a real understanding of industry needs and knowledge of high-quality science," Professor Greenfield said.

eWater Cooperative Research Centres Chief Executive Professor Gary Jones said since 1998 the Award has highlighted the exceptional quality of young researchers entering the water management industry.

"Training postgraduate students and young water professionals is an important role for the Water Forum, a group which consists of cooperative research centres (CRCs) to address water issues of national importance," Professor Jones said.

"The Water Forum is proud to support Australian young water scientists through this Award. We congratulate the finalists and wish them all well for their presentations at the International Riversymposium in September."

GHD Business Manager (Water and Environment) Ross Fryar said the company is proud to partner with the International Riversymposium and support the development of the prestigious award.



International Riversymposium is part of Riverfestival, an initiative of Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government.

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“GHD understands the future challenges faced in managing our environmental footprint and we recognise the opportunity to bring together a range of professionals working to achieve better outcomes,” Mr Fryar said.

“GHD became involved in the Award because at any one time one quarter (25%) of our business is involved in a water project somewhere in the world. Our goal is to build interest among other students and encourage more to enter in coming years.”

The Award was established in 1998 and has evolved into a prestigious annual event to celebrate the excellence of young Australian water scientists.

The International Riversymposium in partnership with GHD and the Water Forum Cooperative Research Centres will present an award to the winner during a dinner at the symposium on Tuesday 4 September.

More information on the Award and the 10<sup>th</sup> International Riversymposium & Environmental Flows Conference can be found at [www.riversymposium.com](http://www.riversymposium.com).

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