



MEDIA RELEASE

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Brisbane student honoured for helping rescue the world's rivers

A 31 year old Brisbane student who developed a new system for monitoring the land bordering rivers throughout the Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria is one of five young Australian scientists recognized for improving the outlook of the world's rivers.

Kasper Johansen, a finalist in the 2008 *Riversymposium* Young Water Scientist Award (in partnership with GHD), joins four other young Australian scientists acknowledged for their innovation in water conservation and management. Mr Johansen is in the running to win \$3000 and will present a paper outlining his project at the 11th International *Riversymposium* in Brisbane on Tuesday 2 September, 2008.

The *Riversymposium* runs from Monday 1 September to Thursday 4 September, as part of *Riverfestival 2008*.

Mr Johansen developed a new approach for monitoring changes to "riparian zones", the land bordering rivers and streams which is an essential component of river health.

"These pockets of land play such an important part in protecting Australian rivers. Riparian zones provide food, shelter and an ideal breeding environment for aquatic animals and even help mitigate water temperature changes through providing shade for water," he said.

"This will be especially important as climate change continues to increase the severity of weather which we expect to impact the water temperature of Australian rivers."

Mr Johansen's system for monitoring changes to riparian zones in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria is based on the analysis of satellite images covering large areas and will ensure any threats or damage to the land can be managed at the earliest opportunity.

He also teamed with the Department of Sustainability and Environment in Victoria to establish a State-wide approach for monitoring riparian zones in Victoria by 2010.

Other finalists vying for the Award include Kathleen Ahern (Brisbane), Kylie Catterall (Gold Coast), James Neal (Sydney) and Thang Nam Do (Vietnam). Their projects include new research which slowed the rapid growth of toxic blue-green algae in South East Queensland and a new warning system which rapidly detects wastewater treatment problems.

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.



Riverfestival is an initiative of Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government



RIVERSYMPIUM

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

“As a large engineering and architecture company, GHD understands the future challenges faced in managing our environmental footprint and we recognize 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 time one quarter 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 11th International *Riversymposium* in partnership with GHD will present the winner of the 2008 Young Water Scientist Award during the morning plenary session on Wednesday 3 September.

More information on the Award and the 11th International *Riversymposium: A Future of Extremes* can be found at www.riversymposium.com

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