

Media Release

Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative wins 2011 National Riverprize!

For immediate release

27 SEPTEMBER 2011

International RiverFoundation (IRF) awarded the Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative (coordinated by the Sunshine Coast Council and Partners) the National Riverprize for excellence in improving river health and engaging numerous communities in the Sunshine Coast region.

The 2011 National Riverprize was announced at the Riverprize Gala Dinner on 27 September during the 14th International Riversymposium in Brisbane, Australia.

Funded by the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative, the \$195,000 National Riverprize is the largest prize for environmental achievement in Australia.

Sunshine Coast Regional Council Mayor, Councillor Bob Abbot, thanked the Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative team for not relying on guidance but for having passion for what they do.

"This is all about protecting the one thing that keeps us alive, our rivers and streams, our water," Cr Abbot said.

Dr Stephen Skull, Manager of Environmental Policy and Programs at the Sunshine Coast Regional Council said "the great thing about this award is the recognition it gives to the community groups that toil away each day on these programs".

Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative won the award for their impressive collection of river-health planning and on-ground achievement in six catchment areas, totaling approximately 5000km of waterways across the Sunshine Coast and southeast Queensland.

"The Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative has done an inspiring job engaging the number of communities they have and working together to improve the rivers around the area, they are very deserving winners" International RiverFoundation CEO, Matthew Reddy said.

"More than at any other time, this award means a lot to Queensland after the floods in 2011. Both finalists underscore the value rivers bring to our lives in Queensland and how communities, government and business can work together to ensure our rivers continue to support tourism, agriculture, healthy lifestyles and biodiversity," Reddy said.

The Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative was chosen over the other outstanding Australian finalist which was Project Catalyst Queensland.

Each year, the National Riverprize is presented, along with the Thies International Riverprize, at the International Riversymposium.

Visit the International RiverFoundation website for further details www.riverfoundation.org.au

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Image: Councillor Bob Abbot (far left) with the Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative representatives and Matthew Reddy (far right)| Credit: International RiverFoundation

Australian Riverprize: Awarded annually by the International RiverFoundation, Riverprize is the world's most prestigious environmental award, giving recognition, reward and support to those who have developed and implemented outstanding, visionary and sustainable programs in river management. In recognition of the high quality of Australian applications in the International Riverprize category, the Australian Riverprize was established in 2001.

About the winner:

Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative, Queensland

The Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative, submitted by the Sunshine Coast Council, unites an impressive collection of river-health planning and on-ground achievements in six catchment areas, comprising approximately 5000km of waterways across the Sunshine Coast region in southeast Queensland. Conducted by a collaboration of Council, local community groups, industry, natural resource managers and other government partners, the Community works to protect and improve the health of local waterways.

The Initiative has delivered outcomes via five themes:

1. Science — regional ecosystem health monitoring and modelling; issue-based research and investigations, and catchment-based community Waterwatch monitoring;
2. Planning and policy — planning scheme provisions, a sustainability policy framework and integrated strategies including a strategy for waterway management that integrates plans for major catchments;
3. Partnerships — between community, local, state and federal governments, industry and research organisations; within and between catchments;
4. Education and advocacy — encouraging the broader community to value and support the protection of their waterways;
5. On-ground projects — major freshwater and estuarine restoration and extensive programs to

minimise urban and rural diffuse-source impacts.

The activities of the Initiative have been underpinned by sound science, constructive partnerships and an enterprising spirit. This has resulted in continual improvements in waterway management and uptake of local learnings in other regions.

Images available on request.

For further information on the Australian Riverprize and Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative please contact:

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