

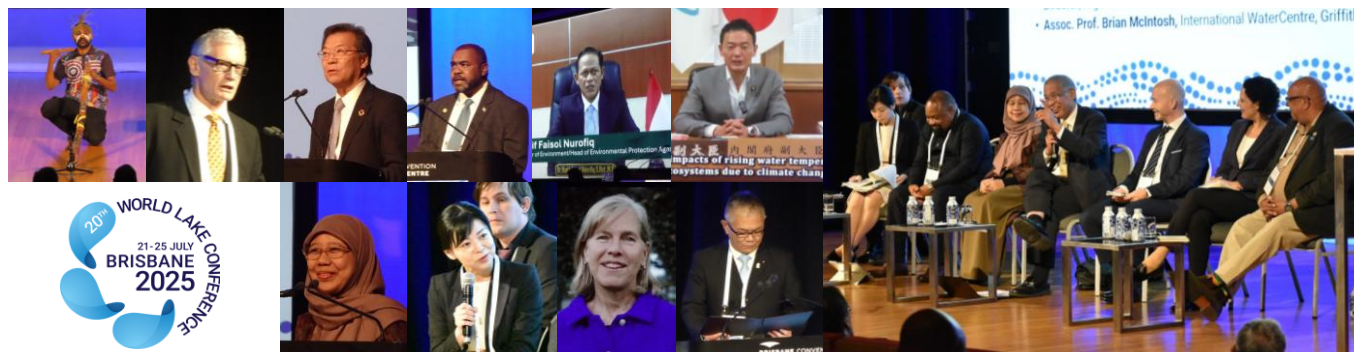


NEWSLETTER

– Save Water, Save Lakes –

International Lake Environment Committee Foundation

This newsletter is also available in Japanese.



WLC20 | Lakes as Sentinels for Integrated River Basin Management

From July 21 to 25, 2025, ILEC and Griffith University co-organized the 20th World Lake Conference (WLC20) in Brisbane, Australia. The conference welcomed 322 participants from 27 countries.

The opening ceremony began with a vibrant traditional performance by Indigenous representatives, followed by congratulatory remarks from the organizers, the Government of Australia, and the State of Queensland.

Subsequently, H.E. Mr. Bultavu, Minister for Environment and Climate Change of Fiji; H.E. Dr. Nurofiq, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia; and H.E. Mr. Nakada, State Minister of the Environment of Japan, took the stage. H.E. Mr. Bultavu remarked that “Lakes do not only reflect what is broken; they also show us what is possible,” while pointing out the limitations of fragmented water management. He underscored the importance of integrated basin management, linking forests to coastlines, and urged that lakes be treated as a national and global priority. H.E. Dr. Nurofiq, reflecting on Indonesia’s leadership in spearheading the adoption of World Lake Day at the United Nations, stressed, “Let it not be ceremonial alone. Let it mark a turning point—toward real action.” He further proposed building a hub for international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. H.E. Mr. Nakada reflected on Japan’s experience in overcoming pollution and restoring lakes, stating, “When we restore the environment, nature responds.” He called for humility in facing nature and for stronger international knowledge-sharing.

The subsequent panel discussion featured high-level officials from Australia, Japan, Indonesia, and Tanzania, as well as Vice Governor Kishimoto from Shiga Prefecture. The discussion explored the future of lakes, the challenges faced by each country, and shared lessons and best practices. It also delved deeply into strong messages related to the UN Water Conference and World Lake Day, and their connection to the Brisbane Declaration. Vice Governor Kishimoto emphasized the importance of approaching lake conservation from three perspectives: present, past, and future.

This was followed by a lecture from Australia on the cultural value of country and the importance of understanding water quality and climate change for Indigenous people.

As the closing of the opening ceremony, messages were delivered from Dr. Gardner, Director of the Ecosystems Division at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Dr. Mumba, the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, and Mr. Mekata, Chairperson of the Shiga Prefectural Assembly, on the occasion of the first World Lake Day, which was established last year and is being celebrated for the first time this year. Dr. Gardner emphasized, “World Lake Day is not just a celebration, it’s a reminder of how deeply lakes are woven into our lives.”

The 21st World Lake Conference (WLC21) is to be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in the summer of 2027. ILEC will continue to advance efforts toward Sustainable Lake Management (SLM) worldwide.

Youth in Action for Lakes

"Youth are not the future. They are the current leaders." — With these powerful words, the Youth Session began. Ms. Stephanie Smith, the moderator, emphasized that the words and discussions of the youth would influence the "Brisbane Declaration." The session saw youth from various regions, including Australia, Japan, Mexico, and Malaysia on-site, as well as Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Zambia joining the discussion online. The total participation included about 60 people on-site and 49 online from 12 countries. In the first half of the session, youth representatives from Mexico introduced the outcomes of international learning and exchange gained through ILEC's youth activities that have been ongoing since last year. This was followed by a presentation from the environmental conservation team Meta Rangers, composed of Japanese elementary and junior high school students, who reported on their local activities. In the subsequent film session, youth from various countries shared videos showcasing the issues and initiatives related to their own lakes, deepening mutual understanding. In the latter half, an international discussion was held, moderated by Ms. Katie Tarrington of Griffith University. Lively exchanges took place on topics such as "visions and challenges toward 2030," "factors behind successes and difficulties in their youth activities," "how to expand solutions generated at the local level to the global scale," and "priority issues for the coming year. At the end, all presenters announced their commitments toward World Lake Day (August 27). Participants in the venue also wrote their own pledges on sticky notes distributed to them, sharing their aspirations across generations and national borders.



 International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC)

Lakes for Life: Youth in Action

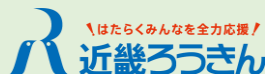
Go to Platform ▶ 

The ILEC Youth Platform "Lakes for Life," which was first unveiled during the session, highlights the activities of youth promoting Sustainable Lake Management (SLM) while raising awareness about the importance of lakes. Moving forward, ILEC's youth activities will be regularly shared. Don't forget to register and share your activities with the world!

Join Us!



The Supporting Organizations for the Youth Session



International Colloquium

Under the theme "A Global Dialogue on Lakes, Rivers, and Communities – And a Local Perspective from Australian Waterscapes in a Changing World," experts were invited from Japan, including the Ministry of the Environment, Shiga Prefecture, JICA, as well as Associate Prof. Brian McIntosh at Griffith University in Brisbane, and ILEC Science Committee members. Keynote speeches and presentations addressed challenges in water resource governance from both global and regional perspectives, with a central focus on integrating scientific and traditional local knowledge to foster common understanding among diverse stakeholders. The importance of local communities in water management, the issues of siloed administration, and the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration were emphasized. A panel discussion followed, where three Australian panelists shared local examples, such as how indigenous knowledge aids sustainable water management, including the detection of bird and dolphin movements for fishing, the issue of plastic waste in rivers, and Australia's water policies. Mr. Takahashi, ILEC Vice President, concluded by highlighting three key points for future water governance: "Addressing climate change," "Promoting integrated lake management," and "Broadening communication." Approximately 100 participants attended in person, with 24 joining online from 11 countries.



Welcome to Brisbane

Ahead of the opening ceremony the following day, a welcome party was held. The "Welcome to Brisbane" sign set up at the venue became a popular photo spot, and participants from various countries engaged in lively conversations and photo sessions to deepen their connections. At the same time, a poster session was held, where presenters introduced their activities, and attendees voted for their favorite posters via QR codes. ILEC showcased a poster of the "Lake of Hope," which featured blue paper written with ideas of what individuals can do for the lake, made together with parents and children who participated in the 5th Family Seminar in the Environmental Education Project last year. Additionally, sake from Japan's Ministry of the Environment was served, further enriching the international exchange.



Keynote Speeches

Four experts with outstanding achievements in the fields of water and environmental science offered diverse perspectives on complex issues related to water management, sustainability, and environmental science. Prof. Zhengwen Liu from the Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology shared his extensive experience in the restoration of eutrophic shallow lakes in China. He explained methods for restoring these lakes to a clear-water state through a combination of chemical techniques, fish manipulation, and the transplanted of submerged macrophytes. Prof. Bradley Moggridge from the University of Technology Sydney, a proud Murri from the Kamilaroi Nation, spoke as an expert in Indigenous water knowledge and climate change. He emphasized the importance of promoting Indigenous leadership and water management based on traditional knowledge. Prof. Kate O'Brien from the University of Queensland introduced her research, which uses modeling and data analysis to explore sustainability challenges across a range of systems, from engineering to ecology. Lastly, Prof. Susanna Wood from Lincoln University, New Zealand, gave a presentation on toxic cyanobacteria in freshwater ecosystems, combining molecular techniques with traditional paleolimnological methods to improve water quality monitoring.



Breakout Sessions

32 sessions were held on 22 topics, including sustainable water management, ecosystem restoration, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and community engagement. Mr. Alejandro Juarez Aguilar, a member of the ILEC Scientific Committee, gave a presentation during Breakout Session 30: Governance, Policy, and Stakeholder Engagement, where he introduced the "Lerma-Chapala Basin Action Plan (2024-2034)." This integrative effort aims to improve governance and territorial management in the Lerma River and Chapala Lake watershed in Mexico. Additionally, Ms. Adelina Santos-Borja, Chair of the ILEC Scientific Committee, chaired Breakout Session 17: Lake Restoration Techniques. From Japan, representatives of Shiga Prefectural Government, as well as the TANAKAMI Children's Environmental Club from the southern part of Otsu City, presented on their freshwater pearl conservation activities, which involve environmental education and fieldwork with local children. To the children who gave presentations, the chair encouraged them, saying, "You are the future leaders. Keep nurturing your passion and continue your work."



B R I S B A N E

Closing Ceremony – And Onward to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

At the closing ceremony, Prof. David Hamilton from Griffith University, the host of the conference, reflected on the event and expressed his gratitude to all those involved. The results of the poster session voting were also announced. The Best Poster Award went to Mr. Affan Nasaruddin, who also served as an advisor for young researchers during the Youth Session, for his presentation entitled “Transforming a Urban Lake into a Living Lab: Heartware Approach Through Community Engagement and Environmental Education.” Afterward, the Brisbane Declaration was presented, and participants were encouraged to show their support by signing on the conference website. At the end of the ceremony, it was announced that the WLC21 would be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the representative from the Tanzania Water Institute, the host organization, gave a promotional presentation.



Field Trips

The field trip offers three courses: "North Pine Dam" in Brisbane, "North Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah)" in the suburbs, and "Gold Coast." Minjerribah is the second-largest sand island in the world, home to unique Australian wildlife such as koalas and kangaroos. Additionally, near the coastline, visitors can encounter whales and sea turtles. On this island, participants had the opportunity to go wildlife watching under the guidance of Prof. David Hamilton, as well as explore unique freshwater lakes, called "Brown Lake," which takes on a brownish hue due to tannins leaking from the branches and leaves of the tea tree. On the Gold Coast tour, attendees walked along the Jubilee Walkway, a coastal trail, and visited the Hinze Dam, which plays a critical role in water supply and hydropower generation for Brisbane.





MEANJIN BRISBANE DECLARATION

At each WLC, a declaration is issued outlining guidelines for the environmental conservation and sustainable lake management. The key points of the declaration adopted at WLC20 are as follows. The full declaration is available on the official WLC20 website.

Preamble

Lakes store most of the Earth's freshwater and have long been essential to human life and ecosystems. However, today they face serious crises due to pollution, overuse, and climate change. Safeguarding the sustainability of lakes is vital for sustainable development, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation. In acknowledging the inaugural UN World Lake Day on 27 August and recognising the 2023 UNEA Resolution on sustainable lake management, the international community declares that the sustainability of lakes and their basins must be integrated into all global, national, and local actions. We commit to advancing practical solutions, strengthening governance, and fostering inclusive collaboration to secure the future of the world's lakes.

Principles for Lake Sustainability

1. Lakes are essential to life and planetary health.
2. Lakes are connected systems, not isolated waterbodies.
3. Lakes are sentinels of environmental and societal change.
4. Lake degradation undermines planetary sustainability goals.
5. Indigenous Peoples and local communities must lead.
6. Climate change demands urgent and adaptive responses.

Commitments to Action | We commit to protect and restore lake ecosystems and catchments by:

- Integrating lakes and their specific indicators into national and global policy frameworks
- Advancing integrated basin-scale coordination
- Supporting Indigenous and community stewardship
- Strengthening monitoring and research
- Promoting innovation and technology transfer to support lake sustainability
- Investing in sustainable lake financing
- Educating and engaging emerging generations, communities, and civil society

A Global Call to Action | WE CALL ON YOU

- Governments: Implement science-based lake policies and management.
- United Nations: Include lakes in the post-SDG framework.
- International Organizations: Prioritize lakes in agreements and funding.
- Scientific Community: Develop tools and improve threat understanding.
- Private Sector: Disclose lake impacts and adopt nature-positive practices.
- Civil Society: Reconnect with and advocate for lakes.

Full Declaration



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