

Climate resilience pathways: Water security and WASH in Asia Pacific

29 April – 1 May 2025

CALL FOR SESSIONS

About the conference

Water security, WASH, and climate resilience are deeply interconnected, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, where climate challenges such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and water scarcity are becoming more severe. This conference will explore how ensuring inclusive access to safe water, sanitation, hygiene, and effective water management is not only critical for health but also foundational to building resilience for all in the face of a changing climate.

The Australian Government has played a significant role in advancing climate-resilient, inclusive water security and WASH in the Asia-Pacific region. The Water for Women Fund, in particular, has generated valuable experience and lessons in these areas. Working collaboratively with regional partners, Water for Women and its partner, the International WaterCentre, are hosting this conference as a platform for professionals, practitioners, and development partners working in water, WASH, climate, and gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) to share best practices and integrated approaches to delivering SDG 6—a fundamental pillar of climate resilience.

Over its seven-year program, Water for Women partners have demonstrated the critical role of water security and inclusive WASH in climate adaptation and resilience, while also showing that effective adaptation is central to achieving water security. This open event provides a timely opportunity to share lessons and insights on key challenges and enablers with other actors across the network working to strengthen climate resilience through the lens of water management and WASH. It also offers collaborators, such as ADB, Sanitation and Water for All, UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank, the chance to share their experiences and perspectives.

The conference is supported by key DFAT programs, including the Water for Women Fund, the Australian Water Partnership, and the Mekong Australia Partnership, among others. It represents a key opportunity for the lessons learned from these initiatives to be shared and discussed with a broader audience across the water and climate sectors.

Participants will gain insights from innovative projects and share actionable strategies that bridge local practices with policy, paving the way for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient water systems. Join us as we work together to build stronger, more secure futures for communities across the region.

Conference theme

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) represents a global commitment to ensure safe water and sanitation for all. This ambitious goal encompasses the sustainable management of water resources, water supplies, wastewater, and water ecosystems, while guaranteeing universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene. However, achieving SDG6 faces significant challenges, particularly from the growing impacts of climate change. Realising this goal demands unwavering commitment to effective policy and practice.

Water management and WASH are deeply interconnected with other critical development priorities, such as economic growth, livelihoods, health, education, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), energy, and food security. Climate change, shocks, and disasters increasingly threaten development progress, directly impacting water resources, WASH services, and water ecosystems. These disruptions also hinder advancements in health, education, energy, social inclusion, and food security due to their strong interdependencies with water management and WASH.

Adapting to climate change and achieving progress on these interconnected goals requires recognising and addressing these cross-sectoral links. A systems change approach is essential to effectively leverage these synergies, ensuring that interventions in one area amplify positive outcomes in others. By designing policies and programs that harness these connections, we can maximise impact and resilience. The *Climate Resilience Pathways* conference seeks to strengthen this critical work by fostering the exchange of practices and insights, enabling more effective and integrated approaches to water security and WASH in the face of climate challenges.

Conference topics

- Understanding and programming in response to climate risks
- Linking WASH (including wastewater), water management and climate change
- Inclusive and climate resilient water and sanitation safety planning
- Mitigation and adaptation for climate-resilient sanitation and the sanitation service chain
- Ecosystem-based Adaptation and/or Nature-based Solutions for water and WASH
- Environmental health risks from sanitation
- Groundwater for climate-resilient WASH
- WASH, water management and food security/agriculture
- Water, WASH and energy
- WASH Circularity in support of climate resilience
- Monitoring climate-resilient water supply and sanitation
- From coping to adaptation in rural water and sanitation
- Advancing rural and remote water supply including professionalisation
- Self-supply water security – risks and opportunities
- Improving WASH access and behaviours in institutional settings
- Menstrual health and climate resilience
- Peace, conflict and water
- Linking WASH with greater community resilience
- Climate resilience through gender-transformative approaches in WASH
- The intersectionality of climate vulnerability and WASH and meeting the needs of marginalised people
- Gender-based violence and WASH access in a changing climate
- WASH, extreme heat and inclusion
- Partnering with rights holder organisations including disability groups
- Human rights and WASH systems strengthening
- Locally-led water management and WASH and decolonisation
- Advocacy and influencing strategies to support SDG6
- Strengthening leadership for climate resilience and inclusion in WASH
- Financing and investing in WASH, including climate financing and life-cycle costing
- Source-to-Sea: water and WASH crossing boundaries in Asia
- WASH in the Pacific in the context of climate change and disasters
- Linking catchment water management to community WASH in the Pacific
- Managing climate impacts on water resources and WASH in the Pacific
- Water and WASH enabling/governance systems in the Pacific, including decentralisation
- Water security, WASH and COP - opportunities for collaboration

Conference format

The 2025 conference will take place in two sub-regional hubs: Bangkok, Thailand and Suva, Fiji. A common (cross-hub) plenary program will unite the two hubs to discuss critical, universal issues. This will be complemented by an in-person program of sessions in each hub addressing issues and opportunities relevant to the sub-region.

Plenary sessions will be jointly delivered by both hubs simultaneously. There will be online streaming of plenaries for online delegates. All other sessions will be in person only. These topic sessions will be locally delivered in person with multiple sessions delivered in parallel. There will be 3-5 streams of sessions, depending on interest and capacity.

Call for session convenors

We are calling for proposals for session convenors to design and deliver hub-based sessions that align with the topics above. We are not accepting abstracts for individual presentations, rather, we are seeking organisations to lead, collaborate and co-convene engaging conference sessions. We are inviting proposals for four types of sessions:

- Conference format
- Training
- Workshop
- World café or other highly interactive formats

Separately, we will also be calling for proposals for poster presentations in both locations (likely in February 2025).

Guidance for sessions

- Sessions must involve speakers from more than one organisation and a diversity of geographic settings. The local and regional context is a priority, but session speakers are not limited to the Asia Pacific region.
- Sessions need to be inclusive with convenors taking steps to reach a cross-section of voices.
- The conference committee strongly encourages speakers from a diversity of sectors (including climate, water resource management, WASH, health, education, agriculture, energy, GEDSI etc.) and people (including gender, sexual and gender minority groups, age, people with diverse disabilities).
- Each session, training or workshop should be planned to be delivered in durations of 1.5 hours in one of the hub locations.
- Conference-format sessions:
 - Guidance is 2/3 time allocated to presentations from a diversity of speakers, projects, organisations, places; and 1/3 for discussion.
 - Session convenors are to source and confirm presenters. Session convenors are encouraged to look beyond their own projects to bring in a diversity of perspectives and experiences, strengthening the practice-sharing outcomes. Speakers are to present in person.
 - Presentations should be aligned to the session topic, but do not need to be formally associated with each other, for example part of the same Program, Fund etc.
- Training and workshop sessions:
 - The most effective training makes use of adult learning methods, allows for a high level of participant activity (active learning which caters to audience diversity) and uses trainers with specific practice and pedagogy skills.
 - Each training / workshop / interactive session must be designed to accommodate up to 40 participants. Workshop convenors will be provided with an update on registration numbers 2 weeks prior to the conference.

In selecting the final program of sessions, the Conference Committee will give due consideration to achieving a balance of content and to forming a program of related topics. The Committee reserves the right to suggest combining sessions or modifying the timing where applicable to align with the conference program and balance of speakers.

Selection Criteria

Session proposals will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. Relevance to nominated conference topic and the broader conference theme of 'Climate resilience pathways for water security and WASH in Asia Pacific'.
2. Attention to one or more of the following cross-cutting issues:
 - Climate resilience
 - Sustainability and scale (as key requirements for resilience)
 - Gender equality, disability and social inclusion
3. Diversity / number of organisations convening/presenting
4. Geographic diversity of work presented and/or relevance to a broad geographical area
5. Contribution of new knowledge or practical models supported by practice-based evidence (e.g. evaluations, research, monitoring data)
6. Clarity and ability to communicate session objectives and activities.
7. Demonstrated awareness of relevance of work to other WASH/WRM/Climate practitioners and/or policymakers.

In selecting the final program of sessions, the Conference Committee will give due consideration to achieving a mix of session topics and convening/presenting organisations.

Session proposal format

- Proposals should be submitted online at <https://forms.office.com/r/WdgUMZk27T>
- To submit a proposal, you will be required to type your proposal details directly into the online proposal submission form.
- Your proposal submission should clearly state which type of session you would like to convene: conference session, training, workshop, or interactive.
- Only submissions made online using the form provided will be considered.
- Online form fields:
 - Which conference location are you submitting a session for? Suva, Fiji / Bangkok, Thailand / Either location
 - Name of Session contact person / lead (first, last name), organisation and email contact
 - Session title (max 15 words)
 - Session type (Conference format / Training / Workshop / Interactive format e.g. World Café / Other)
 - Which of the key topics does this session address? (Choose one only from the list provided in the Call for Sessions guideline); and Secondary / alternate key topic
 - Objective of the session (Max 300 characters)
 - Summary of the session content, activities and timing (Max 3000 characters)
 - Co-convenors/presenters: please nominate the organisations, and if possible, projects, countries and/or speakers that are proposed. *Note: for conference format sessions, we encourage you to elicit presentations from beyond your immediate network, and understand more time may be required to do that – please give an indication as best you can at this stage.

Proposal submission deadline: Midnight (AEST) 17 January 2025.

Conditions of presenting

- All speakers in sessions must register by 17 March 2025 to attend the 2025 conference and nominate which hub they are attending.
- All speakers must intend to make their presentations in-person at a conference hub.
- All travel and accommodation for convenors and presenters is at their own expense.
- All speakers must accept the conditions in the Presenter Consent and Release Form upon session acceptance.
- Any proposal without at least one registered presenter will be withdrawn from the program unless there is a letter provided explaining the reasons for this and the Secretariat accepts this reason.
- Standard audio-visual equipment is provided for all sessions (microphone, lectern, data projector, screen, laptop). Any additional requirements must be listed in the online submission system to check that these can be accommodated.
- Material presented must be based on the authors' own original material.
- Presentations will be made available on the conference website after the conference.

Selection and Notification Process

Session convenors will be notified by email by 11 February 2025 if their application for (co)convening a session was successful.

The Committee may, with your approval, edit your proposal for the purposes of clarity of communication. If this occurs, it is critical you carefully check the edited proposal for grammar, spelling and technical correctness.

Once your session is confirmed, the Committee may share the session title and/or a short overview of your session for the purposes of promoting the conference. Convening organisations will be mentioned in the conference program. Only confirmed speakers would be referenced where applicable.

Key dates

- Session convenor submissions close: **17 January 2025**
- Expected notification of acceptance of session convenors: **11 February 2025**
- Deadline for confirmation by convenors: **17 February 2025**
- Deadline for detailed session plan (template will be provided), and registration of all speakers/convenors: **17 March 2025**

Further information: IWC@griffith.edu.au