

WATERMICRO SYMPOSIUM CASE STUDY

Name	21 st Symposium on Health-related Water Microbiology (WaterMicro23)
Destination	Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
Venues	Darwin Convention Centre
Pax	250 delegates

Event Overview:

The 21st *Symposium on Health-Related Water Microbiology (WaterMicro23)* staged by the *International Water Association (IWA)* at the *Darwin Convention Centre* in June 2023 represented the first time this conference had ever been held in Australia. IWA members are located world-wide and the biennial symposium attracted leading scientists, researchers, water suppliers, public authority regulators, business representatives and students to exchange the latest scientific findings, experience and know-how.

The Symposium was hosted by *Water Research Australia* and the theme was “Water Safety for All – reflections and emerging concerns”, with a focus on climate change and environmental stress.

Northern Territory expertise, accessibility and culture

A joint bid by *Darwin Convention Centre* and *Northern Territory Business Events* won the opportunity for the NT to be the host destination.

Darwin’s close proximity and direct aviation links to Asia meant delegates, especially those from the Asia Pacific, would have access to the latest research, knowledge and practices in health-related water microbiology. It was also an opportunity for Australia and the NT to showcase expertise in this sector.

The *Darwin Convention Centre* and the city’s location on one of the largest harbours in Australia provided the perfect backdrop, highlighting the significance of water microbiology in a region greatly shaped by its environment. The NT’s relevance was also reflected in Symposium sub-themes such as “Indigenous Knowledge and Engagement”, with the NT home to a significant Aboriginal population and able to deliver meaningful cultural insights.

Award-winning convention centre delivers versatile venues

The extensive facilities of the *Darwin Convention Centre* ensured indoor and outdoor spaces would accommodate the diverse program, which included concurrent workshops, an exhibition and plenary sessions. The Centre’s alfresco *Frangipani Plaza* was the venue for the Opening Ceremony’s cultural Welcome to Country and traditional Smoking Ceremony presented by the Larrakia People, Aboriginal custodians of the Darwin region.

WaterMicro23 organisers said that the *Darwin Convention Centre* was a world-class facility, offering the perfect location for an international symposium on health-related water microbiology. The Centre’s waterfront position with its views of Darwin Harbour was deemed to be one of its greatest assets and just a short walk from restaurants, hotels and the city centre.

Delegates explore Darwin

A visit to Darwin's *Mindil Beach Sunset Market*, renowned for stunning sunsets as well as over 200 market stalls, was a feature of the social program, with delegates hosted in an exclusive VIP area. Other social activities included a networking and team building event staged at *Browns Mart*, home of NT performing arts, a cruise on Darwin Harbour and an evening at the waterfront *Darwin Trailer Boat Club*.

In their words:

"WaterMicro23 was a significant opportunity to showcase our country's expertise and connect with an international community of scientists, researchers and practitioners, and to share the latest research and insights on a wide range of topics, from water safety planning to the impacts of climate change on water quality. Darwin served as an ideal location for this conference, given its rich history of water management, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes.

Karen Rouse

CEO, Water Research Australia

"NT Business Events and the Darwin Convention Centre were a delight to work with from the bid, through to the planning and delivery of the event. The Convention Centre was proactive, flexible and provided professional advice. The Conference Organiser, AA&P Events, worked hard behind the scenes, along with the Convention Centre, on the event logistics. The positive and trusted relationship with the teams involved was the secret sauce in delivering a world class event in Darwin."

Darryl Day, Co-Chair,

Organising Committee, 21st Symposium on Health-Related Water Microbiology



The Darwin Convention Centre's spectacular waterfront location was a highlight
(Image provided courtesy of the Darwin Waterfront Precinct)