

OZWATER'21: THE WORLD'S BIGGEST WATER CONFERENCE IN 2021

ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE - ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

8,338 sqm Ozwater'21 exhibition



Adelaide, South Australia was delighted to play host to Ozwater'21—the largest water industry conference & exhibition in the Southern Hemisphere—at the Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC), 4–6 May, 2021. Presented by the Australian Water Association (AWA), the event represented not only the world's biggest water conference in 2021, but the first major national conference to be hosted at the Adelaide Convention Centre since COVID-19, with representation from across all States and Territories. At the time of the event, Ozwater'21 proudly assumed the title as the largest national conference to be held in Australia since the pandemic started.

Ozwater'21 followed a very challenging couple of years for the water sector with droughts, fires, floods and COVID-19. The program comprised more than 130 technical sessions and 80 pitch presentations, along with inspiring, interactive workshops and panel sessions. Delegates heard from an amazing roster of keynote speakers, including but not limited to Gitanjali Rao, Scientist, Inventor and TIME Magazine's First ever "Kid of the Year"; Tim Jarvis AM, Climate Change Expert, Environmental Scientist and International Explorer; and Tanya Hosch, 2021 South Australian of the Year and AFL Executive.

The live, face-to-face conference was complemented by an online program to extend the event's reach to offsite delegates. This virtual component attracted over 85 individuals and four hubs, including international members from across New Zealand, Europe and South East Asia.

In addition to the conference program, Ozwater'21 included an 8,338sqm trade exhibition, featuring 160 exhibitors, along with the announcement of the Australian Water Award winners.

View a short video on the Ozwater'21 event, [here](#).

FAST FACTS

Event Name: Ozwater'21

Type: Conference & Exhibition

Date: 4–6 May, 2021

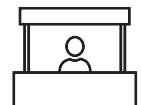
Host Organisation: Australian Water Association

Economic benefit to South Australia: \$ 5.7 million

- ⊕ Australia's largest national conference held since the pandemic started
- ⊕ First major national conference & exhibition held at the Adelaide Convention Centre since COVID-19
- ⊕ Three plenary sessions, 130 technical presentations, 80 pitch presentations plus interactive workshops
- ⊕ ACC staff worked **5,000+** hours to deliver the event



2,500+ attendees from across Australia – an all-time record for an Ozwater event in Adelaide



8,338 sqm exhibition featuring **160 exhibitors**

"This year's Ozwater was our largest in Adelaide and the biggest water event in the world since COVID began. It was fantastic to safely bring together over 2,500 attendees from across the country and over 100 people online to reimagine our water future."

Corinne Cheeseman,
Chief Executive Officer, Australian Water Association

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THE ROADMAP TO OZWATER'21

As part of its national rotation, Ozwater was originally scheduled to take place in Adelaide in May 2020, however COVID-19 restrictions forced last year's event to move to a fully online format. With the support of Principal Sponsor, SA Water, the South Australian Government and Team Adelaide destination partners, the Adelaide Convention Bureau and Adelaide Convention Centre, the event was eventually rescheduled to return to Adelaide in May 2021, representing the first time the industry had been able to gather under one roof in two years.

The host organisation shared that it was critical for both the Australian Water Association and the water industry at large that the event returned to a face-to-face format in 2021, not only in terms of financial sustainability, but to allow the industry to 'share, connect & inspire'.

The Adelaide Convention Centre supported the AWA in achieving this by providing flexible terms and conditions to help minimise the event risk elements. This included a flexible approach to date changes, as well as allowing the client to increase numbers close to the event start date to support maximum attendance. The event was delivered as a true partnership, with both teams committed to its successful and safe delivery.

DELIVERING A COVID SAFE EVENT

AWA shared that South Australia's effective management of COVID-19 and cautious, considered approach to border closures was key to building delegate, exhibitor and sponsor confidence in the lead up to Ozwater'21. This confidence was further bolstered by South Australia's reputation as the 'Festival State' and success in safely hosting several large-scale events, including Adelaide Fringe and the Adelaide Festival, in the months leading up to the conference. Additional confidence was built via the Adelaide Convention Bureau's SA FE operating guidelines, along with the Adelaide Convention Centre's extensive COVID Safe measures and government-approved COVID Management Plan, developed in collaboration with SA Health.

From a logistics and event planning perspective, the event continued to adapt in line with government COVID guidelines right up to its opening. Thankfully, at the time of the event, no state border restrictions were in place limiting delegate travel into South Australia, and density requirements stood at three people per four square metres, which enabled the event to run in a similar fashion to what it would have prior to the pandemic.

"Ozwater'21 highlighted the value of business events to our state's recovery. In addition to injecting \$5.7M into the local economy, Ozwater'21 provided South Australia the opportunity to showcase its strengths within the water industry. The event's significant exhibition component meant the opportunities for trade and investments were vast, which resulted in strong economic tail and lasting legacy for both the Australian Water Association and the water industry at large."

Damien Kitto, Chief Executive Officer, Adelaide Convention Bureau



ACC staff serviced lunch buffets, in line with COVID Safe guidelines

In addition to standard COVID Safe measures across the venue, including the South Australian Government's official QR code check in for contact tracing, and the increased frequency of cleaning and sanitising public areas, key measures put in place by the ACC to ensure Ozwater'21 was a COVID Safe event included:

- **Staff serviced catering stations:** In line with South Australian COVID Safe guidelines at the time, food service during breaks and lunches was via staff serviced buffets. Given the size of Ozwater'21, this required the ACC team to set up three large catering stations spaced across the exhibition floor to aid service speed, promote physical distancing and reduce wait times.
- **Water Service:** As a water industry event, a requirement of Ozwater'21 was that delegates were served tap water only. To accommodate this with strict COVID serving requirements, four water stations were set up within the venue, with staff individually serving delegates water in 100% compostable biocups. In addition to this, SA Water received special approval from SA Health to bring in their water caravan 'Miss Isla' featuring fruit-infused water stations.
- **Exhibition:** The exhibition build took place over four days, and was supervised by Exhibition Floor Managers and COVID Marshals to ensure it was completed in accordance with the venue's COVID Safe Management Plan. COVID Safe information detailing requirements and expectations was emailed to all exhibitors in advance.



Keynote presentation in Ozwater'21 plenary

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Supporting local:** Guests attending Ozwater'21 were treated to a taste of South Australia via the Adelaide Convention Centre's Honest Goodness menu, with 97% of featured produce sourced from local, sustainable environments. In addition, the official welcome reception incorporated an interactive local Artisan Marketplace, providing attendees opportunity to meet, taste and discover a series of boutique South Australian food and drink producers. This area also provided attendees opportunities to purchase a host of tasty souvenirs to take home, in turn supporting local businesses during their ongoing recovery.
- **Venue flexibility:** Ozwater'21 provided a terrific illustration of the ACC's highly flexible design, particularly that of its main plenary hall. On the opening day, the hall was converted from a plenary for 1,000+ to a gala dinner setting before being returned to a plenary format for the following morning. (View timelapse of this conversion [here](#)).

"Ozwater'21 shows what can be achieved when organisers are determined and go through the right processes and practices to ensure the safe delivery of a face-to-face business event. It was encouraging to see the Ozwater team rewarded for their efforts with record attendance, and in partnership with the Adelaide Convention Centre, deliver a successful event which will inspire confidence for the rest of the industry as we all continue to move through the recovery period.

It was a definite thrill to welcome the activity and energy back to our venue. It didn't just give a lift to the destination and the Centre, but served as a means to energise our staff, reminding our team of who we are, why we're here and what it is that we do best."

Simon Burgess, General Manager, Adelaide Convention Centre

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