

Reflecting on the Final Quarter of 2022

The Water Research Group celebrates 10-years of accomplishments in 2022

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Water Research Group (WRG)

The Water Research Group (WRG) forms part of the Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management (UESM) at the North-West University (NWU), Potchefstroom Campus. Established in 2012 by Prof Nico Smit, Prof Victor Wepener, and Dr Gordon O'Brien, the WRG quickly developed into a productive research group with numerous research projects, funded by local and international funders.

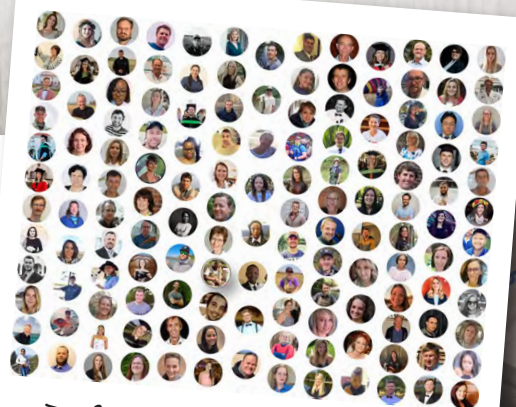
It was a great honour to host a weekend event in October, where current members and alumni had the opportunity to reconnect and share in the full extent of the multidisciplinary research conducted over the last 10 years. The weekend started with a 'braai' on Friday evening, followed by a brunch workshop on Saturday morning which highlighted the contributions and advances the WRG has made to aquatic sciences over the last 10 years. Twenty-three postdoctoral fellows, 58 doctoral, 118 master's, and numerous honours students have gained invaluable experiences on field trips, local and international conferences, and various national and international collaborative opportunities. During the 10 years, the WRG has acquired more

than R80 million in national and international research funding that has led to more than 700 publications, and almost 100 international travel opportunities for postgraduate students to attend conferences, training and research visits. WRG members presented 503 conference contributions, and 42 awards were received at these conferences. The WRG also prides itself in continuous community engagement that include River Clean-Up events, Mini-SASS, Science Week and Fish Migration Days. Alumni, Chantelle Pretorius and Dr Nico Wolmarans, currently working as a Junior Environmental Assessment Practitioner and Application Chemist respectively, shared their career journey with current students, inspiring the next generation to work in industry. Drs Tarryn Lee Botha, Mathapelo Seopela and Gordon O'Brien gave some background and advice on pursuing a career in academia. There were also special video contributions from extraordinary appointed members located all over the world.

This event would not have been possible without donations from Symbiolab, Labotec (Pty) Limited, and Inqaba Biotech.



Group photo of current members and alumni taken at the brunch with the special edition shirts printed for the event



Profile pictures of all the past and present WRG members and collaborators, without whom all these accomplishments would not have been possible



The special edition shirt, with the logos of Symbiolab, Labotec (Pty) Limited, and Inqaba Biotech, and the special printed booklet with 10 years of accomplishments