

SWIMMABLE CITIES

Over 150 signatories unite under new urban waterways global charter and international athletes take to the water at world's first Swimmable Cities Summit in Rotterdam

Tuesday 24 June 2025

Rotterdam, Netherlands



IMAGES AND MEDIA PACK: [HERE](#)

- *The Swimmable Cities alliance of 153 organisations across 83 cities and towns, and 30 countries unites for the world's first gathering of the international urban swimming movement.*
- *Over 200, including British Olympian Toby Robinson, American Ultramarathon swimmer Katie Pumphrey, take to the water in Rotterdam's Rijnhaven for an "opening splash" summit launch celebrating World Bathing Day.*
- *26 new members sign the Charter calling for the right to safe, healthy and swimmable waterways, taking the total number of signatories to 153.*
- *Swimmable Cities launches research project to establish global baseline for safe swimming in urban waterways.*

Over 200 representatives from over 20 countries take to the water to mark the world's first summit uniting a growing urban swimming movement, celebrating the Right to Swim and Nature Rights. The summit, less than a year into the foundation of the international alliance, is promoting bold international action for waterway health, climate resilience, community wellbeing and urban waterfront regeneration. Held in Rotterdam's Rijnhaven, home to a

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floating park and designated swimming area, the Swimmable Cities Summit builds on the momentum catalysed by athletes swimming in the River Seine for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Special guests include Rotterdam's Vice Mayor Pascal Lansink-Bastemeijer, Olympian Toby Robinson (Team Great Britain) and ultramarathon swimmer Katie Pumphrey (Baltimore). A three-day programme of presentations, workshops and swimming breaks brings together government, grassroots and business leaders to work on the next wave of the urban swimming movement.

As part of the programme, the Swimmable Cities alliance launches an international research initiative to establish a global baseline for the swimmability of urban waterways worldwide. The ambitious project will involve interdisciplinary collaboration across environmental science, urban planning, public health, and community engagement to establish 'swimmability' as an indicator for urban liveability; with specific criteria to benchmark waterway health, accessibility, biodiversity, and social impact. The process will allow cities to measure progress, share best practices, and accelerate the transformation of polluted or neglected waterways into safe and swimmable public spaces.

Matt Sykes, Co-Founder & Convenor, Swimmable Cities

"This Summit demonstrates that city swimming is not just possible, it's a right. By the time a city is swimmable, it is more climate resilient, healthier and more equitable. We are a growing movement of governments, activists, policymakers, designers, athletes and citizens who recognise that the right to swim is deeply connected to the stewardship of nature and to the wellbeing of future generations. Our charter has attracted 153 signatories since the Paris Olympics just a year ago and is fast becoming an international force for change.

Pascal Lansink-Bastemeijer, Vice Mayor, City of Rotterdam

"Rotterdam is a city shaped by water – and increasingly, reclaimed by it in the best possible way. Hosting the world's first Swimmable Cities Summit reflects our deep commitment to creating healthy, inclusive and climate-resilient urban environments. We're proud to welcome so many international pioneers here to the Rijnhaven – a living example of how innovation, nature and community can come together to make urban swimming a reality. This summit is not just about swimming – it's about restoring our relationship with water, and leading together toward cleaner, more liveable cities for future generations."

Toby Robinson, Olympian - Team Great Britain

"Last summer, I took part in one of the most significant and talked about swims in history - the marathon swimming event in The Seine river at the Paris Olympic Games. That moment demonstrated to me that The Olympic Games can be a force for change, inspiring tangible action to make cleaner, healthier waterways for entire urban populations. I'm at the Swimmable Cities Summit to keep up the momentum of Paris and put my weight behind this important global movement."

Oumaima Ouaisa, Wavemakers United

"A swimmable city starts with inclusivity and accessibility. Every citizen should feel that urban waterways are theirs to experience and protect. Clean and safe urban

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waterways are not just environmental assets, they are vital spaces for connection, health and wellbeing. I'm encouraged to be a part of this international Summit where the discussion is centred around how we must design cities where everyone, regardless of background, age, or ability, can connect with water and thrive."

While cities face the challenges of increasing urbanisation, climate change and biodiversity loss, communities are rediscovering and reclaiming their rivers and harbours, not least through the international urban swimming movement. But many of the world's urban waterways remain unsafe, unhealthy and inaccessible for both urban swimmers and wildlife. There is an urgent need for better collaboration around improvement strategies and, crucially, better data to determine the 'swimmability' of the world's urban waterways.

Key themes of the Summit:

1. The Right to Swim & Nature Rights (Governance)
2. The Art of Swimming Places (Design)
3. Clean Up Our Act (Waterway Restoration)
4. Urban Swimming Life (Community)
5. Public-Private Partnerships (Investment)
6. Water Literacy (Education)
7. Water Diplomacy (International Cooperation)

By convening a collaborative forum to share challenges, solutions and insights between cities and disciplines, the Summit is contributing to the fast-tracked adoption of best practices.

Another of the Summit's aims is to empower decision-makers during the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a programme which aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems across the world's continents and oceans.

As cities renegotiate their social contracts with the waterways that sustain them, Swimmable Cities is providing a fresh, whole-of-society approach to urban development.

Swimmable Cities

Launched in the lead up to the Paris Olympics in July 2024, the Swimmable Cities alliance is supporting a global, grassroots movement for swimmable urban waterways. With 153 diverse signatory organisations, our Swimmable Cities Charter champions the Right to Swim, celebrates urban swimming culture, and honours the sacredness of water.

Swimmable Cities is incubated by Regeneration Projects, a Melbourne-based environmental consultancy recognised as an Actor in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

SC Co-Founders

Matt Sykes (Convenor), Regeneration Projects (Incubator)

Ana Mumladze Detering, Pan European Urban Bathing Network & SVDK Vienna

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Chris Romer-Lee, Thames Baths & Future Lidos

Sibylle van der Walt, Metz Ville d'Eau

Tim Edler, Flussbad Berlin e.V.

Resources

More info on the Event Page – [HERE](#)

More info on SC website - www.swimmablecities.org/

Event page: <https://events.humanitix.com/swimmable-cities-summit-2025-rotterdam>

Event flyer: [HERE](#)

Contact: Matt Sykes, SC Convenor, hello@swimmablecities.org , +61448 920 123

Swimmable Cities Charter Signatories, June 22 2025

It takes a global village to grow a movement! Our signatories represent an incredible diversity of stakeholders, each with their own superpowers - from local activists and community swimming groups to municipalities and government agencies, civil society organisations, businesses, universities and cultural institutions.

Our alliance is made up of 153 organisations across, 83 cities and towns, across 30 countries:

AUSTRALIA (Brisbane, [Hobart](#), Melbourne, Sydney), AUSTRIA ([Bregenz](#), Vienna, Zwerndorf), BELGIUM (Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent), BRAZIL (Rio de Janeiro), CANADA (Hamilton, [Montréal](#), Oakville, [Ottawa](#), Sudbury, Toronto), CHILE (Santiago), CHINA (Beijing, Shanghai), COLOMBIA (Cartagena), CZECH REPUBLIC (Prague), DENMARK (Copenhagen), ENGLAND (Brighton, Bromsgrove, Cambridge, [Durham](#), Liverpool, London, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Plymouth, Oxford, Stroud, Swansea), [ESTONIA \(Tallin\)](#), FINLAND (Helsinki, Lohja), FRANCE (Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Metz, Paris, Port, [Willems](#)), GERMANY (Berlin, [Bremen](#), Dresden, Esslingen am Neckar, Munich, Stuttgart), HUNGARY (Budapest), INDIA (Goa), IRELAND (Cork, Dublin), ITALY (Imola, Rome), LITHUANIA (Vilnius), NETHERLANDS (Amsterdam, Arnhem, [Leiden](#), The Hague, Rotterdam), [NORWAY \(Oslo\)](#), SLOVAKIA (Bratislava), SLOVENIA (Ljubljana), SOUTH AFRICA (Johannesburg), SOUTH KOREA (Seoul), [SRI LANKA \(Colombo\)](#), SWITZERLAND (Basel), USA (Annapolis, Baltimore, Cambridge, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York, Portland, San Francisco, Sheboygan, St Paul, Washington DC), WALES (Swansea)

Key:

* Founding (July '24)

** Round 2' (Sept '24)

*** Round 3 (Dec '24) - 104

**** Round 4 (Mar '25) – 125 + 3 individuals

[^ Round 5 \(Jun '25\)](#)

City of Yarra (Melbourne, AUS) *

Alsergrund (9th district of Vienna) **

City of Annapolis (USA) **

City of Sheboygan (USA) ***

City of Vilnius (LTU) ****

City of Budapest (HUN) ****

MUNICIPALITIES (7)

City of Rotterdam (NT)*

OTHER ORGANISATIONS (140)

AUSTRALIA (19)

SWIMMABLE CITIES

Regeneration Projects *

Yarra Pools *

Regen Melbourne *

Löyly Studio *

Sydney Water *

Nicole Larkin Design *

Streets Alive Yarra **

Werribee River Association **

Port Phillip EcoCentre **

Parramatta River Catchment Group *

Swimmable Brisbane **

Baked ***

KooyongKoot Alliance ****

Yarra Riverkeeper Association ****

Real Water ****

Bio2Lab Pty Ltd (Melbourne, AUS) ^

Wattle (Melbourne, AUS) ^

Taylor and Hinds Architects (Hobart, AUS) ^

AUSTRIA (6)

Research area of building construction – construction & design, Institute of Architecture & Design, TU Wien **

IG Architektur, Vienna*

Schimmverein Donaukanal, Vienna*

VWMS GmbH – ColiMinder **

MAK – Museum of Applied Arts **

studio zeilensalz (Bregenz, AUT) ^

BELGIUM (7)

Outdoor Swimming Belgium vzw *

Pool Is Cool, Brussels *

Waterland vzw *

Zwembarestad, Ghent (& Amsterdam) *

OMGEVING**

Landschaap ***

Eaulistic BE ****

BRAZIL (2)

Association of Friends of the City Museum **

Guanabara Bay Basin Committee ****

CANADA (6)

Swim Drink Fish, Toronto*

Great Lakes Open Water Adventures ***

The Great Lakes Trust ****

Masters Swimming Sudbury ****

Fondation Rivières (Montréal, Canada) ^

Ottawa Riverkeeper | Garde-rivière des Outaouais (Ottawa, Canada) ^

CHILE (1)

La Loyka*

CHINA (2)

College of Architecture & Landscape Architecture, Peking University, Beijing*

Turenscape, Shanghai*

COLOMBIA (1)

Neopictonic ****

CZECH REPUBLIC (1)

Vlny Štvanice ****

DENMARK (4)

Foundation for Environmental Education - Blue Flag programme, Copenhagen *

Pond Cph, Copenhagen*

Copenwater ***

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Gehl Studio (Copenhagen, DNK) ^

Kiara Oy**

ENGLAND (27)

The Outdoor Swimming Society*

Studio Octopi, London*

Thames Baths, London*

Oxford Bathing Places Coalition, Oxford*

The People's Pool, Liverpool*

Future Lidos*

River & Rowing Musuem, Henley-on-Thames*

Sea Lanes Brighton**

Listen to Locals**

London Waterkeeper**

East London Waterworks Park**

Wyld**

Arbonauts**

Proteus Instruments**

Swim City Basin**

diptribe**

South Downs Leisure**

Cow Tower Dippers**

Newcastle NE1 Ltd**

Community Waters CIC ***

River Action ***

SwimTrek ***

Thames21 ****

Gartenart Swimming Ponds (London, END) ^

Home Counties Surf Club (Oxford, ENG) ^

International Network of Sport Anthropology
(Durham, ENG) ^

ESTONIA (1)

FinEst Centre for Smart Cities, TalTech (Tallin,
Estonia) ^

FINLAND (2)

Bluet Floating Solutions**

FRANCE (11)

Les Ourcq Polaires, Paris*

Nageurs du Prado, Marseille*

Les Libres Nageurs, Marseille*

Metz Ville d'Eau, Metz*

Studio Baignade Urbaine **

Lille Eau Libre**

Fluidion ***

Hydro International ***

SPISEA ****

WEARTH Group ****

Boaz Concept (Willems, France) ^

GERMANY (8)

Design Campus, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen, Dresden*

Flussbad Berlin e.V., Berlin*

Isarlust e.V., Munich*

Münchner Forum **

Schürmann + Witry **

Neckarinsel e.V. ****

sereia Naturspiritualität ****

Polyplan Kreikenbaum Gruppe GmbH (Bremen,
DEU) ^

HUNGARY (1)

Valyo, Budapest*

INDIA (2)

The Goa Open Water Swimming Club ***

Endura Sports Goa ****

IRELAND (2)

Cork Lido CLG*

SWIMMABLE CITIES

City Kayaking ***

ITALY (2)

Agenda Tevere**

Santerno Balneabile ***

NETHERLANDS (15)

World Waternet, Amsterdam *

Foundation Amsterdam City Swim*

Leisurelands, Arnhem*

Swimmable Rivers, Amsterdam*

Drinkable Rivers**

Wavemakers United**

Crazy About Water ***

STudio ID Eddy ****

Badhus (Amsterdam, NL) ^

Bureau Marineterrein (Amsterdam, NL) ^

Kuuma Sauna (Rotterdam, NL) ^

Rademacher / de Vries - Amsterdecks (Amsterdam, NL) ^

Stichting Dankjewellness (Leiden, NL) ^

STIPO (Amsterdam, NL) ^

Zwemstad Leiden (Leiden, NL) ^

NORWAY (1)

Oslo Badstuforening (Oslo Sauna Association) (Oslo, NO) ^

SLOVAKIA (1)

Teritoria**

SLOVENIA (1)

I AM WATER ****

SOUTH AFRICA (1)

Water for the Future, Johannesburg*

SOUTH KOREA (1)

Lifesaving Society Korea**

SRI LANKA (1)

Global Commission on the Economics of Water (Colombo, LKA) ^

SWITZERLAND (2)

S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum, Basel *

Wickelfisch Ltd (Basel, CH) ^

USA (19)

Waterkeeper Alliance (global), New York*

Urban Rivers, Chicago*

+Pool, New York*

Human Access Project, Portland*

Charles River Conservancy, Cambridge MA*

URBANSWIM**

Port Laredo Coalition**

Potomac Riverkeeper Network**

Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore**

Arup ***

Fjord ***

Friends of the Mississippi River ***

Milwaukee Riverkeeper ***

Swimmable San Francisco Bay ***

International Sauna Aid Foundation (San Francisco, USA) ^

South End Rowing Club (San Francisco, USA) ^

The Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club (San Francisco, USA) ^

The Shape of the World (Chicago, Illinois) ^

World Open Water Swimming Association (WOWSA) (San Francisco, USA) ^

WALES

WorkWild**

INDIVIDUALS (5)

SWIMMABLE CITIES

Lewis Pugh, Plymouth*

Dr Naina Gupta

Scott Shilton

Fiona Gibson

Sam Lopez ^

Dr Sean Heath ^

Shane Gould Enterprises (Bicheno, AUS) ^