

# ***Exploring our legal relationship with the living world***

**International Symposium, Thursday 25th and Friday 26th October 2018  
Ecocentre, Griffith University, 170 Kessels Road, Nathan - Brisbane, Australia**



Climate change, biodiversity loss and the global ecological crisis are forcing many people to rethink the legal, economic and governance structures underpinning contemporary industrial societies. People around the world are exploring innovative ways to use the law to better support the health of the living world.

One area receiving growing attention is the use of western legal constructs, such as legal personhood and rights based approaches, to shift the legal status of nature from being objects, and mere human property, to being recognised as *subjects* of the law. These legal approaches are seen by many as a way for human-centred western laws to be transformed towards Earth centred law and governance. 'Rights of Nature' laws now exist in Ecuador, Bolivia and the USA, and legal personhood laws and cases have emerged in New Zealand, India and Colombia. In Australia and the USA, the creation of 'environmental water managers' in domestic law has seen legal rights to water allocated to rivers and wetlands.

But are these 'rights of nature' and 'legal personhood' laws able to transform industrial societies and their legal relationship with the living world? In Australia, and around the world, First Nations Peoples have practiced ancient first laws since time immemorial; laws which have enabled them to care for land and sea country and maintain ecological health for millennia. These governance systems have much to teach the emerging efforts to build ecological laws in the 21st Century. Some First Nations Peoples have used 'legal personhood' laws to create a more pluralist legal framework; others remain concerned that these concepts further separate nature from people.

This conference will bring people together from around the world, to share their knowledge about how ancient and emerging ecological law and governance systems are working in the 21st century, and to discuss how to strengthen ecological governance in the coming decades.

## **Confirmed speakers include:**

- Associate Adjunct Professor Mary Graham, University of Queensland & Kombu-merri First Nations People
- The Hon. Justice Brian Preston, Chief Judge of the NSW Land and Environment Court
- Cormac Cullinan, South African Lawyer and author of *Wild Law*
- Professor Klaus Bosselmann, University of Auckland, NZ
- Hugo Ivan Echeverria, Lawyer, Ecuador
- Lisa Mead, Earth Law Alliance, United Kingdom
- Dr Geoff Garver, McGill University, Canada
- Dr Erin O'Donnell, Melbourne Law School, Australia
- Dr Michelle Maloney, AELA

Other speakers from India, Colombia, the US and New Zealand will be confirmed soon.

## **REGISTER TO ATTEND**

<https://www.trybooking.com/URZQ>

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## **Call for Proposals: closes 18 May 2018**

Proposals are invited from people who would like to share their research and work/professional practice at the symposium.

Proposals can include academic papers (15 minutes), panels and workshops (50 minutes), discussion groups and yarning circles (25 & 50 minutes), performances and experiential activities.

**To submit a proposal, please use the Proposal Template, which can be found on our website:**

[www.earthlaws.org.au/events/2018-symposium](http://www.earthlaws.org.au/events/2018-symposium)

**Proposals can be up to 300 words long and be accompanied by a 100 word biography for each presenter. Proposals should address one or more of the key themes of the conference:**

- First Nations Peoples' approaches to Caring for Country
- Existing legal mechanisms relating to Caring for Country, rights of nature, legal personhood and laws relating to individual animal or plant species
- Critical analysis of whether changing the legal status of the living world in industrialised nations improves the protection and management of ecosystems
- Critical analysis of the economic, cultural and social impacts of creating ecological laws and governance
- Normative proposals about how rights of nature, legal personhood or other legal approaches — including changes to constitutional, property, intellectual property, criminal and other fields of law — could be created to change the legal status of nature in western law
- Administrative and institutional structures needed to support Caring for Country, rights of nature, legal personhood status and other legal approaches
- Issues within broader governance and ecological regulation scholarship relevant to the legal status of the living world

[www.earthlaws.org.au](http://www.earthlaws.org.au)

## **Who should attend the Symposium?**

First Nations People, academics, legal practitioners, environmental policy makers, animal and environmental protection advocates, law students and anyone interested in the future of ecological law and governance

## **Key dates**

- 12 March - Call for Proposals opens
- 18 May - Call for Proposals closes
- 30 June - Final program available
- 24 October - Evening welcome reception hosted by ELGA and AELA
- **25-26 October - Symposium**
- 25 October - Conference Dinner and Earth Arts event
- 27 October - Rights of Nature Australia, Peoples Tribunal

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## **MORE INFORMATION**

**Website:** [www.earthlaws.org.au](http://www.earthlaws.org.au)

**Email:** [convenor@earthlaws.org.au](mailto:convenor@earthlaws.org.au)

## **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/172835329973857/>



australian earth laws alliance