

CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

WHAT THE HISTORY OF NATURE CONSERVATION LAW TELLS US ABOUT ECOLOGICAL FUTURES: A NON-EUCLIDEAN VISION OF THE ANTHROPOCENE

Law and Nature Dialogue
Webinar Series

Prof. Liz Fisher | 15 September 2021, 5pm (AEST/Sydney time)
Session Chair : **Dr Michelle Lim**

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The late Ursula Le Guin once noted that to ‘speculate safely on an inhabitable future, perhaps we would do well to find a rock crevice and go forward. In order to find our roots, perhaps we should find them where roots are usually found’. In this webinar, I argue that national nature conservation regimes, while imperfect, can provide a set of legal and cognitive resources for developing law in the Anthropocene. This is because these laws provide examples of where the nature/society divide has been reconfigured. Three insights in particular can be gleaned from a study of these regimes. First, law has a creative framing power. This is evidenced by the multitude of ways that nature conservation laws are configured. Second, nature conservation regimes give rise to active legal work due to the need to interpret, apply, enforce, and resolve disputes concerning nature conservation. Third, this active legal work involves an expansion of legal imagination. That is an expansion in an understanding of what law is and what it can be. By understanding these legal pasts, more robust legal futures can be fostered.

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Prof. Liz Fisher

Liz Fisher, BA/LLB (UNSW), D Phil (Oxon) is Professor of Environmental Law at Corpus Christi College and the Faculty of Law. She researches in the areas of environmental law and administrative law exploring the interrelationship between law, administration and regulatory problems in different legal cultures. In particular she focuses on the role of science in that interrelationship. Her 2007 book, *Risk Regulation and Administrative Constitutionalism*, won the SLS Peter Birks Prize for Outstanding Legal Scholarship 2008. She is author of *Environmental Law: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP 2017) and co-author of *Fisher, Lange and Scotford, Environmental Law: Text, Cases and Materials* (2nd ed, OUP 2019). She is General Editor of the *Journal of Environmental Law* and Review Articles Editor of the *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*. She has won teaching awards, and served as Vice Dean of the Law Faculty 2013-6. She has recently completed writing a book with Sid Shapiro about reimagining US administrative law. Her current projects include work on legal imagination and environmental futures and a project with others charting English administrative law case law.

