**Conversation roundtable: how do we build greater responsiveness into our legal systems?**

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Abstract

**Context**

Our legal systems are often criticised for their sluggishness, rigidity and slowness to change: marching ‘in the rear and limping a little’.[[1]](#footnote-1) As we confront greater and faster ecological change, this won’t be good enough. Greater responsiveness, flexibility and adaptability to fast-moving circumstances will become crucial if our legal systems are to have any hope of coping and fulfilling their community roles.

**Questions for discussion**

The questions thus arise:

1. What does a more adaptable legal system look like? What are its characteristics?
2. At what level/s of our current legal systems does change need to occur? At the level of individual statutes and regulations? Regulatory frameworks? Institutional design and powers? Values? Jurisprudence? Or all of the above?
3. And where do we look for models and resources in other disciplines, or ecocentric exceptions in our own, that can help us design these adaptable legal systems?

Join us for this informal, facilitated roundtable discussion to begin this exciting and necessary conversation. We will discuss each of the three questions above, with a view to crosspollinating ideas and identifying directions that are promising for further enquiry. A selection of readings are provided below and may be used as a starting point to spark our discussions.

**Background readings**

Carl Folke et al, Adaptive Governance of Social-Ecological Systems (2005) 30 Annual Review of Environmental Resources 441

John S Dryzek and Hayley Stevenson, Global Democracy and Earth System Governance (2011) 70 Ecological Economics 1866

Paul Martin and Neil Gunningham, Leading reform of natural resourcemanagement law: Core principles (2011) 28 EPLJ 137

1. *Mt Isa Mines v Pusey* (1970) 125 CLR 305(Windeyer J). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)