

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Law postgrad wins National Environmental Law Essay Prize

The UTAS Faculty of Law has achieved a double success in a national environmental law competition.

Law PhD Candidate Meg Good was announced as the winner of the 2012 National Environmental Law Association (NELA) Environmental Law Essay Competition, at the NELA 2013 National Conference in Melbourne.

The winning entry by Meg was titled *The River as a Legal Person: Evaluating the Benefits of Nature Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection in the Context of Water Management in Australia*.

The prize consists of \$1000, one year's free membership to NELA and publication in the *National Environmental Law Review*.

Fellow UTAS Faculty of Law student Anna Davies also entered a paper, which was highly commended by the judges and will be published in the NELR online.

The Competition is an annual event, open to all students enrolled in Australian tertiary institutions, and is run by NELA – a multi-disciplinary organisation established in 1982 to obtain and exchange information on issues relevant to environmental law and policy. The theme for the 2012 competition was 'Where to From Here?'

The judging panel for the competition was comprised of Wayne Gumley (Monash University), Greg McIntyre SC and Dr Hanna Jaireth.

Dr Jaireth praised Meg's essay as a "wonderful contribution to the scholarly literature on the rights of nature".

At the awards ceremony, Meg thanked the NELA Executive and the Judging Panel for their confidence in her research and expressed her support for the Competition as a unique and important forum for students of environmental law to share their work with a broader audience.

In her speech, she explained that the essay originally began as a chapter from her thesis research which focuses on the benefits and limitations of rights-based approaches to environmental protection.

She has previously published on the utility of human rights approaches to environmental protection, specifically in the context of the human right to water.

Meg credited inspiration for the title of her essay to a preliminary agreement signed by the New Zealand Government in 2012, which recognised a major river as a 'legal person' with an 'independent voice'.

"The concept is moving from theory into practice, and it is vital that the legal commentary in this area moves with it," Meg said.

Meg was also recently announced as a double finalist in the Southern Cross Young Achiever Awards, in the Environment and Leadership categories.

Earlier this year, she was appointed as the Tasmanian State Co-ordinator of the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel and will be speaking at the Voiceless Animal Law Lecture Series in April.

**Information Released by:**

**Media Office, University of Tasmania**

**Phone: (03) 6226 2691 Mobile: 0447 537 375**

**Email: [Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)**