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# Creating legal rights for rivers: lessons from Australia, New Zealand, and India

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## Description / Abstract

As pressures on water resources increase, the demand for innovative institutional arrangements, which address the overuse of water, and under provision of ecosystem health, is rising. One new and emerging approach is the use of legal personality to protect water systems in law through the granting of legal rights to rivers. This constitutes a significant development in the fields of environmental law and water resources management, yet little analysis is available of how the approach has been used and applied. We critically examine the new legal rights for rivers using three case studies from Australia, New Zealand, and India. We analyze how legal rights have been created in each case, and the complexity of enforcing these legal rights to protect the rivers. We conclude that legal personality could be a useful alternative approach for river management, provided that the new legal rights are given sufficient force and effect.

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