

Welcome to Turning Conscience Into Action, the Earth Charter podcast. Join Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter International Executive Director, in her fascinating conversations with great thinkers, scholars and activists from around the world who are working in the fields of sustainability, ethics, education and social transformation. Our purpose is to generate new insights on how to face current global challenges and inspire informed action.

Hello, so welcome to our Earth Charter podcast, Turning Conscience Into Action.

Today we have the pleasure of welcoming Michelle Maloney, who is joining us here from Australia. Thank you so much for joining us, Michelle. Thank you for having me. I understand you are in Brisbane, is that correct? Where are you in Australia? Yeah, I live in Brisbane, just north of the city of Brisbane, which is in the state of Queensland, sort of a subtropical place. Yeah. It's amazing and beautiful to think that Australia has a region that is subtropical, similar to where we are. Yes. Okay, so let me introduce our audience to Michelle.

Michelle Maloney holds a Bachelor's of Art in Laws from the Australian National University and has a PhD in Law from Rifting University in Australia. She has more than 30 years experience on working on climate change, sustainability, and community building projects. She's the co-founder of various organizations, networks such as the Australian Earth Laws Alliance. She's not only the co-founder, but also the national convener. She's the co-founder and director of the Future Dreaming Australia, co-founder and director of New Economic Network Australia, among other organizations.

I'm very impressed with the work you do. And also I would like to share with our audience that Michelle Maloney is advisory council of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, Garn, and a member of the IOC and World Commission on Environmental Law. So thank you so much for taking the time for being here with us today, Michelle. It's lovely to speak with you. Thanks for your time. So your work has been focused on creating systems change. You can see in your website and bio that you have been working towards a nurse-centered culture and governance system.

Can you share with us what drives you to do this kind of work?

Certainly. What drives me, I think, today is the same thing that has been driving me since I was a little kid. And it's pretty simple. It's just love. I love plants and animals and our planet. I was always someone who would spend time sitting with animals or watching, you know, walking through the bush or the forest and looking at creatures and plants and animals. So my interest has always been in how we can look after these plants and animals, but also, I guess, a humility and knowing we're not the only species on Earth.

And what the rest of the planet does to self-generate life is really important. So what drives me is love and concern and care for all of the creatures and all of life. That sounds very grandiose, but it's true on days when I feel sad about climate change or the impacts of what we're doing. The thing that gets me out of bed is knowing other species are being affected by our actions. And as a human being, I have a small role to play and I should just keep getting up and doing that. Yeah, that's great.

We can see you're very motivated and committed. What is a nurse-centered culture in governance system? Yeah, well, perhaps first we can talk about what isn't an Earth-centered culture. And I know we only have a small amount of time to chat today. So to lay the groundwork, I guess the work we're interested in is how did we get to a point where human beings are causing so much harm to the natural world, where something like only four or five percent of the biomass of the planet now is wild animals and plants.

And the rest is all about what human beings have created. So for me, early on, my interest was how can I play a part in changing the way human beings think about themselves in the context of what they can and can't do to nature? So it's not about trying to control nature. It's about trying to understand our place as human beings. So for me, an Earth-centered culture and governance system is one where human beings literally wake up every day, thinking about what they're eating, what they're doing, what they're caring for, understanding local place, understanding where their water comes from, what the impacts of their actions are, but not in a terrible negative guilty way to actually know place and to know the local and surrounding environment, to understand our impacts and to care for it.

And I guess most importantly, an Earth-centered culture is about the way we see ourselves in relationship with the rest of the living world and inanimate world, plants and animals and rocks and such. But governance, to me, is the really interesting stuff. That's the simply put, governance can be used to explain the rules we make as human beings to live and work and play together. And what I am part of as a non-indigenous person in Australia, my heritage is from Irish people brought to this country in colonial times.

My culture has always been, for the last 500 years at least, very focused on human beings, you know, being able to use the resources they want and think they need to continue human beings doing what human beings want. What I'm more interested in is what Indigenous cultures and other peoples have kept, which is a culture of caring for other species, but also a governance system. So rules and the way that they interact with each other in a society that continue to support life. And, you know, we just never think of large-scale destruction as being acceptable.

So it seems that it's looking to the world through new lenses, with new eyes, not so anthropocentric, but seeing our relationship with the rest of the world, nature. Yeah, and although it's new eyes for Western thinking, it's very old eyes for humanity. You know, when you look across different cultures and places, they have many, including the First Nations peoples here in Australia, an absolutely amazing ancient culture which is Earth-centred and has always factored in in very practical ways, how to care for the local place and having strong rules in a society about what you can and can't do and how you sustain life and for all beings.

Now, rights of nature, first laws, first jurisprudence, in a nutshell. Let's talk about that and if you can share with us what does that mean. Yeah. It's in terms that not many people are familiar with, but what is your understanding on Earth jurisprudence and the rights of nature and how these concepts have evolved over the past two decades? Yeah, it's a great question and how they have evolved and emerged and changed is really quite an exciting

part of law and social movements. But I'm happy to start at the beginning and I can combine that with my own introduction to Earth jurisprudence.

So I started life doing a law degree in a Western sort of law school and was looking at environmental law and other good things. Many, many approaches within what we call traditional environmental law are still very good, but many of them are still bound to how can human beings use up the Earth and then patch up the mistakes or fix up the damage later? In 2009, I was very lucky to go to a conference that introduced me to these other concepts around Earth jurisprudence and rights of nature. So to perhaps think of it visually, I invite people to think of Earth jurisprudence as a theory or an idea and think of it as a big umbrella, because it's an umbrella term that we use and I use in my work to mean the following.

Earth jurisprudence is a term that was coined by Thomas Berry, who was a wonderful thinker and writer. He called himself a geologist, but people think of him as a deep ecologist. In a book called *The Great Work*, which built on many other things he had written, he put to, I guess, as a question, what would it look like for industrialized societies to transform into an Earth-centered culture? And what he says about Earth jurisprudence is that we need a new jurisprudence or theory of law or theory of governance to help us, all of us, focus on caring for the Earth instead of destroying it.

And in his book, I always think of Earth jurisprudence as trying to find a way to build all of our governance systems to focus on a healthy relationship with the living world instead of either ignoring it or treating it badly. How does rights of nature and other issues fit in? Well, at its simplest form, Earth jurisprudence invites, particularly industrial societies, to look at the underpinning structures, the underpinning governance support structures of our society like law, economics, education.

And he looked at religion as well and the way people think and the way people do, and that all of our systems really need to be changed to look for healthy ways to connect and support nature and the living world. And more... I like the way you put it, just by, as an invitation for us to look at things through, by trying to build or develop a healthy relationship with a large living world. Is that correct? That's absolutely correct, because it's not about us dominating, controlling or even fixing and protecting.

It's about us understanding in a humble way that we are only one part of the Earth community. And what's nice for me and why this work resonates for me and others is it really was an invitation as someone who was no longer acting like a lawyer. I was doing other work at the time to look at the role that law and economics and education and other systems play in industrial societies. So rights of nature, to me, is one of the threads inside this broader weave of Earth jurisprudence. And in very simple terms, rights of nature as a legal concept says Western law treats nature as an object.

It's nothing more than the background furniture for the life of human beings. What if our Western legal system saw the living world as a subject of law, the same as human beings, at least as important, but preferably more so. The rights of nature movement has taken off in lots of different directions. And it's not just connected to Earth jurisprudence. There's

many ways that rights of nature laws are emerging and growing. But for some of us, Earth jurisprudence is this umbrella framework inviting us to change the way we do things.

Rights of nature is one of the ways we can engage with that. And other ways are Earth-centered economics, learning from Indigenous peoples here in Australia. The biggest challenge we have if we want to respond to changing industrial society towards Earth-centeredness is how do we do that when we are in a colonial country? And by that, I mean the British Empire claimed Australia 230-ish years ago. We have the oldest continuous ancient culture on Earth here. But we also have these new Western laws.

How do we make a future that is Earth-centered but doesn't repeat colonial impact on Indigenous peoples? That's a whole other conversation. So the rights of nature is part of first laws? Yeah, look, everyone, it's an emerging space. So different people use terms differently. What I would say to folks is Earth jurisprudence is such a big term. A lot of people say Earth laws instead of Earth jurisprudence. And it still means much more than just the laws handed down by a parliament. So they can be interchangeable, if that makes sense.

We named ourselves the Earth Laws Alliance because, like Earth jurisprudence, we're interested in how we change the rules of our societies to be more focused on supporting the Earth community. So Earth laws can be referred to as an umbrella term, like Earth jurisprudence. It can be used to talk about any law or governance or even economic rules that focus on the Earth first. Rights of nature is nearly always talked about as rights of nature, but it could be seen as part of the family of Earth laws.

I hope that makes sense, but that's just my word. Yeah, sure. So about 30 years ago, there was not much buzz or talk about rights of nature as much as nowadays, right? Why do you think that's so important for the current times? Well, I think the short answer is people are very worried, desperate even for new solutions and new ways to stop harm to the environment. I think rights of nature has been rising at the same time that deep concern for climate change and biodiversity loss and other issues has escalated and become much more of a concern.

It's interesting now at my age, I started working on environmental issues, probably in the heyday of sustainable development in 1988. When, you know, in 1992, we had the Rio Declaration and a lot of really positive action in the 90s, looking at what we then referred to as sustainable development. But then in the late 90s, I still believe that we saw a lot of corporate misinformation about climate change that caused lots of confusion. And a lot of the existing good things were broken down and changed and we started to lose our way.

So then in the early 2000s, people were, I think, really trying to look for new solutions and new ways forward to break out of what Western environmental law had managed to achieve so far. And very quickly, due credit to people like Mari Margo and Thomas Lindsay, who really started to lead the use of rights of nature and community rights as a term and as lawmaking in the US in around 2006, 2007. It was their work that pioneered Western law being critiqued from this Earth-centered point of view, saying why are corporations allowed to have so much power?

And that was done around what side? Yeah, so one of the first local laws that asserted rights of nature and community rights was in 2006 in the USA. And if you look at the work of Thomas Lindsay and Mari Margo, who are now with a different group, CDER, you'll see the history of it. And they were consultants when people were interested in rights of nature going into the Ecuadorian constitution. So they are early thinkers. These ideas were adapted and changed for different environments. And now, and we can talk about it if we have time, I often talk about rights of nature laws are like a tree.

The tree is saying we must recognize nature in our Western legal systems so that we can enable it to have a voice and have a stronger say and protection. But there's all these different branches on the tree about how you might do rights of nature laws in different ways. And that can be a bit complex and you may not want to talk about that today. Can you share some examples of a specific place in the world or specific places in the world that have developed the right of a river or lake? And what does that mean?

Yeah, and in which case, I think I'll go back to the tree. So just imagine a tree. And so in the early 2000s, what people in the US were doing was across a local community, they were making their own laws that said this community in this local place has the right to defend its local environment. And nature has the right to exist and thrive and persist and evolve in this place. And this is what you would call a kind of a place based or a whole jurisdiction approach to rights of nature. And then we saw in Ecuador, the entire constitution and the entire country is meant to respect rights of nature across all of Ecuador.

What was interesting and what people see a lot more of today is that many years later around 2017, it was in New Zealand. The very first time that a government was in negotiation with indigenous groups in that country, and they were trying to work out how the indigenous people could get the river back that is part of their relationship and their community. And that's when the lawyers settled on the idea of legal personhood for the river. And this was the first time that rights of nature went from, you know, a whole of country like Ecuador or a whole of community like in the US kind of basis into a ecosystem specific place.

So today, I can barely keep up with the laws being passed. It's an exciting area. But you've got lots of different origins for river rights or the recognition of a river as a legal person in New Zealand. Courts in India picked up the idea, but then those decisions were overruled in Colombia. The Atrato River was recognized as having its own legal rights and the local communities were recognized as having the right to defend the river. And so that was about trying to protect the river and clean it up from, I believe it was mining damage and such.

In other places, Panama has a rights of nature law, I believe. I haven't read about it myself yet, but I think it's more across the whole jurisdiction. But you've got river rights in lots of other places. And even in New Zealand, you've got the rights of the forest, the order where a forest has its own rights. Is Ecuador still the only country that has the rights of nature written in their constitution? That is a great question. I believe so. Could we think that this is because of the significant percentage of the population in Ecuador being indigenous?

Look, I think the reasons for that development are complex and I'm no expert on how it all happened. But the other issue is there are many countries like Ecuador where they revise their constitution more often than other countries. For example, in Australia, this might sound strange, but the Constitution for the nation, which was developed in 1901, has only had a small number of small changes to it. The Constitution itself is very hard to completely revise. So the constitutional issue in Ecuador is also because some countries have made it easier to change their constitution than others.

So definitely people power and an interest in changing those systems in Ecuador, but also some countries, it's very hard to change the constitution compared to others. Yeah, sure. So it's nice. And thank you so much for giving us such an illustration from these examples, from the US, to Ecuador, the whole constitution of a country, and the example of the river in New Zealand. And we're very happy to hear that there are more and more of such examples across the world. Yeah. Now, for instance, the rights of nature, human rights, the human rights, and the human rights to a healthy environment.

How do they relate to one another? Earth loss, rights of nature, the human rights to a healthy environment. How did they complement one another? Or are they the similarities and differences? Yeah. And look, I think if you take a philosophical step back for a moment and realize there are no human rights without the entire ecosystem being healthy, I think it's easy to say in theory that human rights and nature's rights are absolutely complementary. There's a terrible saying, but it's true. There's no economy on a dead planet.

You know, we can't be arguing for human rights when we literally have no water to drink, no food to eat and, you know, no oxygen to breathe. So the the health of our environment, the health of this planet and our ecosystems is primary. We're only part of that. But that said, there's a complex relationship in the way law works. Some people see rights of nature as conflicting or challenging human rights. I personally don't see it that way. I think you could certainly set up any situation to have conflict.

But in essence, today we have more than a hundred constitutions around the world that recognize of the right to a healthy environment for people. And that's terrific. It's still focusing on what human beings need from nature, rather than how do we make sure that the entire, you know, natural systems continue their life. But I think if a country says human beings have a right to a healthy environment, then what they're saying also is we need a healthy environment. So that's very positive. And it's a good thing.

I think some of the conflict happens when people perceive differently what the rights of nature could look like. And one of the arguments is Westerners in a place want to have nature seen as separate from nature, pristine and wild and over there in a national park. Whereas people who've lived there forever, indigenous peoples and others need to be an our part of that place. So their human right to a healthy environment is not to just be separate from it, but to live and use and be part of it. So that's where some of the conflict happens.

But in theory, I think the right a human right to a healthy environment is absolutely built on the idea that we must have a healthy environment. And however you articulate that in

law, there's complexities. Rights of nature is trying to say nature has an intrinsic value without human beings in it. But it doesn't say human beings should be bumped out of it, if that makes sense.

Yeah, I like very much the way you put it in the sense that there's first there's no human rights without a healthy environment. But also that the the evolving thinking around the importance of the human right to a healthy environment has a focus on humans. No, yes, we protected environment because it's good for human rights. That's right. Whereas in from the angle of the rights of nature, we look at things from a much broader and life centric approach. That's exactly why. Unfortunately, people always get themselves into situations where different interests compete.

And that, you know, in a case by case basis can be complicated. But in essence, rights of nature shouldn't be saying people have no right. It means that people need to fit into the healthy capacity of whatever living world they're part of. If they're desert people, then they need to be, you know, working with the desert to survive. If they're rainforest people, they need to live in a way that the rainforest can continue its life and its evolutionary journey. And this is the challenge for all human beings.

How do we live and have a wonderful life whilst the rest of nature lives and has a wonderful life? I do believe it's possible, but we have to make some pretty significant changes in the industrial societies. Yeah, starting that change with the world views, how humans see life in the world. So I think you answered already, but if you have anything else, if we look to save to answer to those minds. When people see a conflict with the right to development or the human rights versus or against the right to a healthy environment, or even the right of nature.

How you articulate a clear, simple answer when people say, no, no, wait a minute. We need to ensure the right to development for developing nations first to address poverty. We need first to feed people ensure we address hunger and poverty. And after that, we can address the issues around the right to a health environment or the rights of nature come secondary. Well, it very much depends on the context. But to me, there are two big issues.

Human beings would love to have a safe place to live, nice food, great community. You know, a sustainable way of being. We understand that that's really important. We can only do that if our living world can support that. So there may be places on earth like the Antarctic where, you know, we can't live there naturally. We have to bring things in. We have to make those choices about what we bring in, what we use, what we consume. But then there's a separate issue about the idea of development. Who's development?

What type of development? And where are the profits going? Even in Australia, which is a relatively rich country, we have significant poverty in different places. And when I work with community groups and we look at how do we build earth-centered governance here? The first questions we ask are, who lives here? What do they use and what do they need to live? And sometimes you do an assessment of their food, their energy, their housing. And we actually have enough. But what we find is governments and corporations still want to come in and log a forest or dig a big hole and make a mine.

And I always suggest to people, follow the money. If a new development is being proposed that doesn't support the local communities and is actually making huge profits for a small amount of elite people in a corporation, then maybe that development is not something we need to support. Maybe we need to be focusing on how human communities in any given place can make a good livelihood whilst not wrecking the environment. Now, that is so simplistic.

Given we've got 500 years of colonisation, where even today in many countries around the world, we have corporations that sort of belong to rich countries that control a lot of resources and systems in other countries that make it incredibly difficult for local people to thrive while these guys come in, take their resources, make gazillions of dollars and aren't helping life in general. So the two things I guess I want to say is, yes, human beings in place, in their communities, should be able to access all the things they need for a good life. But number two, what do we define as development and what do we define as a good life and what should we allow to happen? And these are complex place-based issues. So I don't think development at all costs. No, not at all.

But I do think there's enough for everyone if everyone is looking for just enough.

Looking for just enough, it's good. So you have been working in that intersection between law, ethics, first ethics and education.

Especially with a focus or an effort to trigger systems change. How do you relate the relationship between these different dimensions, law, economics, ethics and education? Can you comment on that intersection of these various dimensions that actually many people see as separate, but you see them as connected? Absolutely. That's a great question. Thank you. Look, it comes back to the simple definition of governance that I gave, and it is so simplistic. But if you think about human beings from the dawn of time until today, as soon as we have to work with other human beings, we make some rules.

You know, who's going to go out and catch those fish? When they bring those fish back, how do we divide them amongst ourselves? You know, these simple rules of how we make decisions, how we allocate resources. This is what I call governance. But it's also culture. You know, you could call it politics. You could call it many things. So at the end of the day, though, what I'm a great believer in is simplicity. And you get a group of people in any different part of the world. They have developed their own worldview and their own ways to explain life through cosmology, their own rules for how you can hunt and how you can fish and how you can grow and how you can build.

To me, they're all interconnected. What human beings create in the human sphere, the way we communicate, the way we talk, the way we make rules, the way we teach each other, it's all a construct. You know, how people learn and teach and eat and believe in Japan might be very, very different to someone in the deserts of Africa. So these cultural aspects of how we make a life can be molded and shaped and changed by our attitudes. So what your question is, how do I see the intersection between law and ethics and education?

They're all connected. And other cultures don't even have a word for ethics or education. You know, remembering that it's Western globalized thinking that has taught us there's a difference between law here and economics over there. Where a different community just has the rules or the law of the land. How do you wake up every day and make a living without wrecking the joint? So how I see everything that we do. Yes, it's interconnected. But I also like to drill down into place by place and understand the culture.

What they call law. What are these people called education or ethics? How do they operate? How do they work? And even in Australia, from community to community, there are different ways of thinking about things. And that's when we then find unique ways to inject questions to get people thinking in an Earth-centered way. So I see this intersection as really important. I often probably to a flaw can break down those boundaries between these Western ideas of what is law, what is economics and just come back to people and go, how do we want to make a good life here?

And what are the rules we need to support our understanding of place and our protection of place? And then we build out from there.

I can't make it very simple. It does make it simple. It's deceptively simple, but we then it's very place based and, you know, contextual, if that makes sense. Like you can't just say, this is what we should do. Here is a bland statement. It's like, well, no, actually, what is the community concerned about? You know, unfair logging, just a crazy destruction of forests that doesn't have to happen. How has this happened? What is the culture? Who's got the interest in this? How do we find common ground?

Then you build out, well, OK, how do we educate other people to think about forests the way the caring people do? How do we change laws to reflect what it is we want to see? So it all intersects. But first you have to look at the relationship between the people and the place and then look at the challenges they face. And I find it an endlessly fascinating way to look at the world. Find out how people are in relationship now and then find the very specific, unique tweakables, changeables. And it doesn't mean it's easy to change.

Sometimes, you know, it's very hard. But that's how we think. That's how we work.

Now, I understand you are writing a book on sharing some critical reflections on the rights of nature. Can you share with us some of the key ideas you're working on?

Yes, look, I'm embarrassed because I'm behind writing a book. I have a structure and I have many good things in there, but it's nowhere near finished. But yes, what I'm very, very honoured to be invited to just sort of think about kind of what you've been saying, you know, two decades of the rise and rise of rights of nature. So my book is it's not a critique of rights of nature. I'm very supportive of any thinking that helps people reconnect with nature and the living world. What it is is perhaps an overview for those who are new to it of where this movement came from, what's in place at the moment.

And I guess my question is always, where are we going to? And I hear in a lot of groups with different academics and thinkers and activists, sometimes they say rights of nature is actually the first step back towards an earth-centered culture for certain cultures. It

might not be the end game. It might be that fighting for people to see the rights of nature is a first step into going, whoa, how do we change so many aspects of our society? So it's not just about we will introduce one brand new law for this river and the whole world will change and be better.

It's not that. And what I'm seeing around the world is that people are using rights of nature as a really important, potentially exciting way to get people thinking differently and then really drilling down into how do we live in relationship with this wetland? How do we change our lifestyles to care for place? So that's kind of the angle I'm taking that if rights of nature has done so much in 20 years to raise these conversations, what's going to happen next? I don't know, but I'll be playing with some of those ideas.

Yeah, I was just here thinking that the urban, probably a great majority of the urban society are living without thinking about their relationship with the land. Yes. They're living quite disconnected from nature, but connected through knowledge through internet, etc. or the urban life, but disconnected from their essence, I would say, in nature. So certainly these questions are good to spark some reflection and thinking. Absolutely. And it kind of circles back to the origins of Earth's jurisprudence.

Thomas Berry talks about how industrial societies wanted to create a wonder world where life could be easier. But what they created was, yes, some of it's easier, but it's also a waste world and we're all disconnected. You know, me too. I live in a little modern house in Australia when it's very hot. I have air conditioning. You know, I'm not out there plowing the fields and watching the insects every moment of the day. I do try to be outside every day, gardening and looking at the world and walking and, you know, taking the time.

But so many of the planet's human population is disconnected and has forgotten. We have forgotten what we always used to know is that we're just part of this community and we really need it. We need a healthy nature, much more than it needs a healthy human society. And what we say here from in our Earth's Charter work is that it's very hard for us or anyone to care for something you don't know. Yes. Or to care for nature that you don't feel connected with. That's right. We need to come back to that connection.

Now, Garn, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature.

You were part of that. I would like to ask you if you could share with us what is the work of Global Alliance, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, and what is the Rights of Nature Tribunal? What are they doing? And what's the purpose of that or the focus of its work? Yeah, no, thank you for the question. So the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, or Garn, was created. I wasn't part of the original creation group. I was on the Executive Committee for many years and now I'm part of the advisory group.

So I'm not involved in the day-to-day work, but I'm a huge supporter of Garn. So the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, its roots really came out of, I think it was the 2010. It was a massive meeting in Bolivia where people drafted the Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth. And it was a big gathering. And they created. It's a beautiful document. I really recommend people read it. And from there, this not-for-profit

organization started to be born. And what it does is it brings together people from all around the world who are interested in rights of nature and different aspects of legal personhood for nature and such.

And it's got a strong focus on promoting the good developments that are happening, sharing information with people about how to make rights of nature laws. And their website has a lot of resources and they have different events. The Tribunal is really interesting. And I was there when it was first created, although I haven't been involved in the last few years because it's held in different countries. And as an Australian who's far, far away in terms of carbon miles, I try not to travel too much.

But the Global Alliance created the International Rights of Nature Tribunal. And it's a really exciting space because it's not a government thing. It's created by civil society people, lawyers, indigenous elders. And what they do is they hold hearings and listen to cases, looking at abuses of the rights of nature or listening to people talk about threats that are happening to a local place and articulating those threats and articulating the solutions from the lens of a rights of nature approach.

So when you go to their website, they've got hubs in different places in the world and they've in the past few years, they've held rights of nature tribunals typically in the same city and around the same time as the climate change negotiations, the COP, so that they can raise the profile of rights of nature and demonstrate what it would look like if you were, I guess, supporting the rights of nature, you know, a voice for nature and then really looking at existing problems with a different lens and showing that many of the activities that developers think are perfectly fine.

In fact, violating the rights of nature in a place to exist.

Wow, that sounds really fascinating how this organization movement and different instruments are evolving. Now we come to our last question. It's regarding the first charter. Yeah. The charter was drafted in the 90s. It was launched in the year 2000, but certainly was also highly influenced by Thomas Berry thinking. Yes. In certain the language in their shatters more poetic than loss, I would say, but has a very strong focus on a very strong approach, a nurse-centric or life-centric approach. Yeah.

A worldview that is articulated there in their charter.

Certainly words such as first community. So anyway, I would like to ask if you could help us see the linkages between the bold views that are articulated in their charter and these efforts of the rights of nature or first laws. How can there maybe, how do you see the first charter informing, supporting or being used as ethical foundations, maybe, for the current efforts or movement around the rights of nature? Yeah, no, it's the Earth Charter to me is this remarkable document. And I know from working with colleagues like Brendan Mackey, who's a climate change scientist, but also a forest ecology scientist in Australia.

He was one of the many, many people involved in the very, very early drafting of it. And I was amazed when he told me how long it took to create it because so many people were

just working voluntarily to make it happen. And I was always a great admirer of that. And I think certainly the Earth Charter is like a timeless statement that can be used at any scale, whether you're thinking about life with your children in your home or teaching kids in a school or trying to even more difficult teach employees in an organisation about some general principles to work from. I think that the Earth Charter focus on caring for the community of life.

And I've always loved that term ecological integrity. And I know it's got elements of social and economic justice. I think basically it offers, I guess, a call for people to engage with its principles and then go out into the world and apply those principles in all of the work they do. And I think that's really nice to have something that an engineer or an accountant or someone growing potatoes can think about and learn from. And certainly it's part of the family of earth-centred ideas that I think are out in the world at the moment.

And we certainly talk about the Earth Charter when we remind people how they can start to learn about, you know, their own selves, their own relationships with the living world and what can they do. And that depends on, you know, their place and their, by that I mean where they live and their calling and what they'd like to do. And the Earth Charter is a nice grounding point for people to sort of, you know, either start from or return to to think about core principles. So definitely compatible with and supportive of anyone who's working in rights of nature or wants to share with other people what an earth-centred way of thinking or doing could look like.

That's wonderful. Well, thank you so much. And I certainly very much hope to see, to still see the continuation of this.

Evolving process of earth laws, earth ethics, in the rights of nature, and that you can use their charter as a foundation or as a reference. Yes. As you move forward. Yeah, as a lovely guide. Absolutely. Well, thank you so much, Michelle, for being here with us today and good luck for the writing of your book. I think it's going to be very important because I would say that many people are hearing hearing there and more and more on earth laws or the rights of nature. So I certainly can see vision that could be a great contribution to expanding awareness and understanding on these topics. Thank you so much.

Thank you. Thanks for your time today.

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