

Water Story Series Q&A: Sarah Macoun and Julie Brook

18 October 2022

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This [National Water Week](#), HopgoodGanim Lawyers have partnered with [Caxton Legal Centre](#) for a Justice in Focus: Water Stories series. Through interviews with guest speakers, we explore multi-disciplinary responses to environmental disasters and climate change in Australia, particularly in Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

In this interview, Sarah Macoun, Partner, HopgoodGanim Lawyers, speaks with Julie Brook RPIA, Principal, Meridian Urban.

Watch the full video



Quotes - Julie Brook, RPIA, Principal, Meridian Urban

"Planning is the best tool we have in the toolbox to mitigate future risk".

- Julie Brook on the role of planning in risk assessment and mitigating the impact of environmental disasters.

"I think our knowledge and our ability to understand risk, and particularly with natural disasters, continues to improve and change all the time and it helps us make really good evidence based settlement decisions."

- Julie Brook on how risk-based planning can support prevention and mitigation of future environmental disasters.

"Planners become planners because they want to make the world a better place and they do want to build cohesive and fair communities with equitable access."

- Julie Brook on human rights aspects and supporting our most vulnerable communities.

"The most vulnerable people in our society will then take the places of those in our most marginalised areas in terms of natural hazards and so we need to think about that and try and prevent that from the get go."

- Julie Brook on human rights aspects and supporting our most vulnerable communities.

"We need to recognise that every event is different. Coming from North Queensland ... cyclone country, there aren't any lines on maps. We don't say, 'oh well, this wasn't the same as Tracy. It wasn't the same as Yasi.' Because we all know that every event is different and you hang onto the ABC and you listen for every cyclone warning because you know that it could get faster, get slower, change direction or change intensity ... You have to be really alert... So how can we shift the flood behaviours to that kind of mentality?"

- Julie Brook on the challenges of risk-based planning.

The views expressed in this interview are personal views and should not be taken as legal advice.

What is the HopgoodGanim and Caxton Legal Centre Water Series?

The [HopgoodGanim Lawyers](#) and [Caxton Legal Centre](#) Water Stories series focuses on learnings and responses during recent flood events in Queensland and Northern New South Wales. Across the series we are shining light and provoking wider conversations on land and water management, disaster planning and response. By sharing the water stories of our guest speakers, we hope to better understand our collective responses and preparedness for environmental disasters. This Justice in Focus series will continue across each day of [National Water Week](#) and aims to generate discussion that encourages human-rights centred approaches and forward thinking that incorporates the many voices and stories about people, places and our connection to water.

About the speakers

A Partner in HopgoodGanim Lawyers' Planning and Environment team, [Sarah](#) has extensive experience in the areas of planning approvals and litigation and dispute resolution, together with

many years of expertise in environmental legislation and policy. Through her planning work, Sarah has developed a keen interest and detailed knowledge of natural hazards and risk management, with a particular focus on floods.

[Julie Brook](#), RPIA, Principal, Meridian Urban is a local and regional planning specialist with over a decade of experience across the public and private sectors. Julie holds an MBA, providing her with diverse business and project management skills for holistic governance, policy and strategy outlook.

Pro Bono services, HopgoodGanim Lawyers

HopgoodGanim has a [Pro Bono strategy](#), which is focused on delivering long-term changes in three impact areas: First Nations communities, Environmental disasters, and Domestic and family violence.

Learn more about [HopgoodGanim's Pro Bono services](#), and connect with our [Head of Pro Bono, Leanne Collingburn](#), for more information.

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