

DR SUE PILLANS

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A strategic professional with over 20 years' experience delivering complex programs at the intersection of science, government policy, cross-sectoral environments and stakeholder engagement. Former Director in the Queensland Government with expertise in leading Statewide initiatives, operational planning, policy and strategy development and stakeholder collaboration within complex environments.

A highly experienced Program Manager with proven ability to design, coordinate, implement and evaluate programs that deliver measurable outcomes across sectors including: environment, natural resource management, regional development, business and industry and agriculture. A passionate marine scientist with expertise in coastal and marine systems, bridging science, policy and on-ground delivery to support evidence-based decision-making.

Recognised for applying strategic visual facilitation and systems thinking approaches to help organisations and stakeholders to understand complex challenges and identify practical pathways to action. Experienced in working with and building strong cross-sector partnerships, long-standing client relationships[#] and co-creation of projects with First Nations communities.

While my career spans government, research and small business sectors, the common thread throughout has been **helping organisations understand complex issues, engage stakeholders, identify opportunities and deliver practical outcomes**. Together, these experiences provide more than 20 years of expertise in research, analysis, strategic planning, communication and collaboration that directly supports organisational objectives.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Strategic thinking
- Program management and operational planning
- Stakeholder engagement and partnership development
- Strategic visual facilitation
- Science communication

QUALIFICATIONS

- PhD in Marine Science, The University of Queensland, 2006
- Bachelor of Science (First Class Honours), Griffith University, 1999
- Bachelor of Science (in Environmental Studies), Griffith University, 1997

CONTACT DETAILS

Dr Sue Pillans

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FOUNDER - DR SUE PILLANS “Picture your ideas”, www.druepillans.com

2015 – present

- Delivery of strategic visual communication and facilitation services to over 70[#] organisations across Australia and the East Asia Pacific region across: environment, business and industry, government, not for profit, First Nations, education, science, research, health and community:
 - Strategic visual facilitation <https://drsuepillans.com/recording/>
 - Infographics and illustration <https://drsuepillans.com/recording/infographics/>
 - Environmental education <https://drsuepillans.com/education/>
 - Children’s environmental picture books <https://drsuepillans.com/books/>
- Science Communicator for CSIRO Torres Strait Island rock lobster fishery project and the Ningaloo Outlook project (2016 – 2023)
- Program Manager for Capturing Coral Reef and Related Ecosystem Services project, The University of Queensland (2014 - 2016)

PROGRAM MANAGER - Healthy Oceans program

The University of Queensland, 2014-2015

- Managed and coordinated research development and stakeholder engagement for the Healthy Oceans program, across global, national and local marine research programs and proposals
- Managed and fostered relationships and coordinated cross-disciplinary collaboration to support international, national and local projects and funding proposals and opportunities

PROGRAM MANAGER - Australian Water and Environmental Research Alliance (AWERA)

University of Queensland and Griffith University, 2024

- Led the strategic development, operational management and coordination of a strategic multi-university research partnership of National leaders in water and environmental sciences
- Strengthened cross-institutional collaboration to meet strategic research objectives

DIRECTOR - Skills, Extension and Supply Chains

Qld Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, 2012-2013

- Led and managed the Statewide development and provision of agricultural skills, training and workforce development priorities, extension policy and supply chain facilitation across agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors
- Led and managed a high-performing multidisciplinary team delivering upon multiple government priorities and seven election commitments
- Provided strategic high-level advice to senior executives, industry leaders and the Minister, regular performance and financial reporting and strategic communications through preparation of Cabinet briefs, Ministerial correspondence/briefings, National submissions, policy briefings

DIRECTOR - Agribusiness Development

Qld Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, 2012

- Led a dedicated team of agribusiness specialists delivering Statewide and regional agribusiness advice to meet the Governments strategic agricultural priorities
- Negotiated and improved regional service delivery frameworks and policy and program development, investment planning and coordinated regional transition management

DIRECTOR - Program Coordination

Qld Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation, 2010-2012

- Led the strategic leadership for regional program coordination and service delivery of the South East Queensland region, including regional business planning, operational day-to-day planning and management, program design, coordination and management, financial management, performance, monitoring and evaluation reporting, emergency response, transition management
- Strategic communications and high-level influence through preparation of Ministerial correspondence, Ministerial briefings, budget briefings, Departmental and industry forums

DIRECTOR – State Planning Program

Qld Department of Transport & Main Roads, 2011

- Led the Statewide transport planning program and provided strategic leadership of the State's transport planning program of 170 projects, delivering upon complex planning initiatives
- Introduced improved program coordination, governance, financial oversight, auditing and reporting and quality assurance processes across the State Planning Program

PRINCIPAL POLICY OFFICER – Reef Plan Secretariat

Qld Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2009-2010

- Led the development of strategic policy advice and coordination of whole-of-government environmental priorities and election commitments for the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan
- Development, oversight and delivery of the Reef Plan Research, Development and Innovation Plan and Investment Strategy
- Provided strategic high-level advice on complex marine and coastal issues, including coastal development and management of coastal and marine resources, through preparation of reports, cabinet briefings, Ministerial correspondence, Premier briefings, science/stakeholder meetings

PRINCIPAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER – Aquaculture & Seafood Industry

Development, Qld Department of Tourism, Regional Development & Industry, 2008-2009

- Led Statewide industry development, policy reform and industry liaison for the Queensland seafood and aquaculture industries
- Provided strategic advice, business case development and funding proposals for tourism development opportunities, including for place-based initiatives and regional branding
- Provided strategic communications and high-level advice through preparation of Ministerial correspondence, business cases, policy papers, funding proposals, grant application review and reporting, procurement and contract management and industry meetings and forums

SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER – Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan Review Team

Qld Environmental Protection Agency, 2007-2008

- Managed and coordinated the scientific input into the review of the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan and translated and synthesized complex marine science into clear strategic narratives that supported Ministerial decision-making and Departmental communication outputs
- Provided strategic communications and high-level advice through preparation of scientific submissions, communication products, public consultation, media engagement, Ministerial correspondence and verbal briefings to media, stakeholders, Senior executives and Ministers

EARLY CAREER ROLES

- **ADJUNCT RESEARCH FELLOW - Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science, UQ, 2008-2020** Guest lecturer and knowledge broker for how to use science to inform public policy
- **CONSERVATION OFFICER - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, 2005-2006** Assessment of permit applications for activities in the Moreton Bay Marine Park
- **PhD IN MARINE SCIENCE - The University of Queensland, 2000–2006** PhD on the “Effectiveness of no-take marine reserves in Moreton Bay, subtropical Australia”

PUBLICATIONS LIST

- **Pillans, S** (2026) Infographics published in Scoulding, B., Hobday, A.J., Trebilco., et al (2026) Deep Dark Futures: Foresighting Human Impacts on Mesopelagic Ecosystem Services. Fish and Fisheries, 1-19
- **Pillans, S** (2026) Graphic recording published in Russell, K, Fryirs, K, Wilson, E, Woods, K, Lovette, S, Vietz, G et al (2026) Building capacity in an environmental management industry: investing in collective social capital to advance stream management, Earth's Future, 14 (3)

- **Dr Suzie Starfish**** (2024) Roger the wrasse and the itchy fishes. Little Pink Dog Books, Australia (**Author/Illustrator name)
- Van Putten, I., McClean, N., Chin, A., **Pillans, S** & Sbrocchi, C (2022) What happens after a shark incident? Behavioural changes among Australian beachgoers. *Human-Wildlife Interactions* 16(1): 67-83
- **Dr Suzie Starfish** (2022) Cranky Frankie and the oceans of trash. Little Pink Dog Books, Australia
- McClean, N., van Putten, I., Sbrocchi, C, Chin, A., **Pillans, S** (2020) Reducing risk in human-shark interactions in NSW: Trialling a participatory approach to understanding beachgoer behaviour. Report to the NSW Shark Management Strategy, NSW Department of Primary Industries, University of Technology Sydney
- **Pillans, S** (2020) Infographic published in 'Children and Innovation: A Wenner-Gren workshop', Nowell, A., Langley, MC & Riede, F, *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 2020 29(1): p 6-8
- **Pillans, S** (2019) Infographic published in 'You know, I could trip and fall onto the track!': inspiring text production', Brosseuk, D., Exley, B & Neumann, M, *The Reading Teacher*, pp 1-8
- **Dr Suzie Starfish** (2018) The Great Barrier Thief, Little Steps Publishing and Little Pink Dog Books, Australia
- **Pillans, S** (2018) Graphic recording published in Plaganyi et al (2018) Evaluating an empirical harvest control rule for the Torres Strait *Panulirus ornatus* tropical rock lobster fishery, *Bulletin of Marine Science*, 94(3): 1095-1120
- **Pillans, S** (2017) Infographic published in 'The Future of Modelling to Support Conservation Decisions in the Anthropocene Ocean', Chapter 20, Figure 20.3 in *Conservation for the Anthropocene Ocean: Interdisciplinary Science in Support of Nature and People*. Editors Levin, P.S & Poe, M.R, Elsevier Inc
- **Pillans, S** (2017) Graphic recording published in 'Changes and Challenges for Future Generations', Section 3, Figure 15.2 (not credited to the artist) in *Science and Solutions for Australia*, CSIRO Publishing
- **Pillans, S** (2015) A roadmap for science into policy: the what, who, how and where of making a difference. *Decision Point #86*, The University of Queensland
- Ward, TJ et al (2011) **On Expert Panel** for the National Marine Condition Assessment – decision model and workshops. Report prepared for the Australian Government (Department of Sustainability, Environment and Water), Canberra
- University of Queensland (2009) **Expert contributor** to the Scientific Principles for Design of Marine Protected Areas in Australia: A Guidance Statement. The Ecology Centre, The University of Queensland
- **Pillans, S** (2009) Conservation and industry cooperation for better marine protected area planning and management. Discussion paper for IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas
- **Pillans, S.**, Ortiz, J.C., Pillans, R.D & Possingham, H.P (2007) The impact of marine reserves on nekton diversity and community composition in subtropical eastern Australia. *Biological Conservation* 136:455-469
- **Pillans, S.**, Pillans, R.D., Johnstone, R & Possingham, H (2007) Effectiveness of subtropical no-take marine reserves: benefits to fisheries management and biodiversity. In Day, J.C., Senior, J., Monk, S & Neal, W (Eds) *First International Marine Protected Areas Congress, Conference Proceedings*, 23-27 October 2005, Geelong, Australia
- **Pillans, S** & Lewis, W (2006) Effectiveness of marine reserves in Moreton Bay. Policy Implication Summary submitted to the Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet, Brisbane
- **Pillans, S** (2006) Effectiveness of no-take marine reserves in Moreton Bay, subtropical Australia. PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, Brisbane
- **Pillans, S.**, Pillans, R.D., Johnstone, R.W., Kraft, P.K., Haywood, M.D.E & Possingham, H.P (2005) Effects of marine reserve protection on the mud crab *Scylla serrata*: in a sex-biased fishery in subtropical Australia. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 295:201-213
- **Pillans, S.**, Johnstone, R. J., Possingham, H. P., Pillans, R.D., Dews, G and McPhail, I (2004) Effectiveness of no-take marine reserves in subtropical Queensland, Australia. In *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Science and Management of Protected Areas*, May, 2003, Canada, pp1-8

- Loneragan, N.R., Dews, G. & ***Round, S** (1999) Sustainable Development of tropical Australia: research and development for management of land, water and marine resources. Final Report. CSIRO Division of Marine Research, Brisbane (*nee Round)
- Connolly, R.M., ***Round, S.**, Thomas, B., vanDorssen, J. & Milton, D (1998) Dispersal of double-ended pipefish (*Syngnathoidesbiaculeatus*): Measurement using otolith microchemistry. In Tibbetts, I. R., Hall, N.J & Dennison, W.C (Eds) Moreton Bay and Catchment. School of Marine Science, The University of Queensland, pp 475-476 (*nee Round)

#VISUAL COMMUNICATION CLIENTS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray Darling Basin Authority • Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority • CSIRO (Commonwealth, Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) • Australian Institute of Marine Studies • Fisheries Research & Development Corporation • ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies • Northern Territory Government • Queensland (Qld) Health • Qld Department of Education • Teach Queensland • Qld Department of Environment and Science • Qld Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors • Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries • Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority • Queensland Trade and Investment Queensland (Study Qld) • Queensland Secondary Principals Association • Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre • P&Cs Queensland • Australian Council for Educational Leaders • Scope TV, Channel 10 • The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) • Capturing Coral Reef and Related Ecosystem Services (CCRES) • The University of Queensland • Network of Environmental Social Sciences • UniQuest • University of Tasmania • Queensland University of Technology • University of Southern Queensland • Griffith University • James Cook University • Monash University • University of Melbourne • University of Technology Sydney | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrain Natural Resource Management • River Basin Management Society • Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation • Queensland Farmers Federation • Queensland Canegrowers • Sugar Research Australia • TierraMar • Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Club • Queensland Returned & Services League • International Foundation for Integrated Care • CT:IQ • Welcoming Cities • CentacareCQ • Parenting Research Centre • Australian Society of Ophthalmologists • Powerlink • BHP • Woodside Energy • Sprott Planning • North Queensland Bulk Ports • Gympie Regional Council • Gympie STEM Hub • Markwell & Associates • Behaviour Innovation • Treasury Wine Estate • Tech Girls Movement • US National Girls Collaborative • HealthHack Australia • Hear and Say • Exmouth District High School • Tully State School • Tully State High School • Cardwell School • Barker College • Byron Bay High School • Kadina High School • St Mary's Primary School • Barambah Environmental Education Centre • Wynnum Kindy • Rainbow Beach library • Wynnum library |
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