

DR SUE PILLANS

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A strategic engagement professional with over 20 years' experience delivering programs across government, research and small business, with a career centred on strategic communication, program coordination, stakeholder engagement and interactive education.

Recognised for applying strategic visual communication 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, youth engagement and co-creation of projects with First Nations communities. A passionate marine scientist with expertise in coastal and marine systems, bridging science, policy and on-ground delivery to support evidence-based decision-making.

Former Director in the Queensland Government with expertise in leading Statewide and regional initiatives, operational and business planning, policy and strategy development, high-performing multi-disciplinary teams and stakeholder engagement within complex collaborative 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 champion for STEM education and student aspiration. With over 20 years industry experience as a woman in STEM, I have dedicated my career to helping people connect with science in meaningful ways, including as my alter ego *Dr Suzie Starfish*. This includes a decade of experience as a STEM educator engaging children and young people through the delivery of hands-on STEM engagement programs which are inclusive, engaging and impactful.

While my career spans government, research and small business, the common thread throughout has been **helping people understand complex issues, engage stakeholders, identify opportunities and deliver practical outcomes**. Together, these experiences provide more than 20 years of expertise in strategic communications and engagement, strategic planning, program management and interactive education that directly supports organisational and learning objectives.

KEY CAPABILITIES

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| • Stakeholder engagement | • Creative thinking |
| • Strategic visual facilitation | • Science communication |
| • Program management and coordination | • Interactive STEM education |
| • Strategic thinking and communication | • Inclusive and accessible education |
| • Positive and inclusive leadership | • Environmental and marine science |

QUALIFICATIONS

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

CONTACT DETAILS

Dr Sue Pillans

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Location: Queensland, Australia

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FOUNDER - DR SUE PILLANS, "Picture your ideas", Independent Consultant/Business Owner, 2015 – present

- Delivery of strategic communications, stakeholder engagement, visual facilitation and program management services to over 70[#] organisations across Australia and the South East Asian region: across environment, education, science, health, business, industry, government, community, First Nations, not for profit sectors:
 - Strategic visual facilitation <https://drsuepillans.com/recording/>
 - Infographics and illustration <https://drsuepillans.com/recording/infographics/>
- Design and delivery of hands-on STEM engagement programs from Kindergarten – Year 12:
 - Environmental education and science communication <https://drsuepillans.com/education/>
 - Schools' engagement: <https://drsuepillans.com/education/schools/>
 - Children's environmental picture books <https://drsuepillans.com/books/>
- Program Manager and Science Communicator for:
 - CSIRO Ningaloo Outlook project, schools' engagement program
 - CSIRO Torres Strait Island rock lobster fishery project
 - UQ Capturing Coral Reef and Related Ecosystem Services project

PROGRAM MANAGER - Healthy Oceans program

The University of Queensland (UQ), 2014-2015

Managed and coordinated multidisciplinary research programs and stakeholder engagement involving researchers, government and external stakeholders

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

University of Queensland and Griffith University, 2024

Led strategic development and management of a multi-university research partnership

DIRECTOR - Skills, Extension and Supply Chains

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

Led and managed statewide development and provision of agricultural skills, training, workforce development and extension priorities across agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors

DIRECTOR - Agribusiness Development

Qld Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, 2012

Led Statewide agricultural economics and agribusiness advice supporting regional projects and Queensland agricultural strategy priorities

DIRECTOR - Program Coordination

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

Led strategic regional program coordination and service delivery across South East Queensland

DIRECTOR – State Planning Program

Qld Department of Transport & Main Roads, 2011

Led a Statewide transport planning program comprising 170 projects, \$170M program budget

PRINCIPAL POLICY OFFICER – Reef Plan Secretariat

Qld Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2009-2010

Led whole-of-government coordination of complex environmental priorities for the Reef Water Quality and Protection Plan (Reef Plan), a State and Federal Government initiative

PRINCIPAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER – Aquaculture & Seafood Industry Development,

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

Led statewide industry development, policy reform, stakeholder engagement and industry liaison for the Queensland aquaculture and seafood industries

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

Qld Environmental Protection Agency, 2007-2008

Managed and coordinated scientific input and stakeholder engagement for the Zoning Plan Review

EARLY CAREER ROLES

ADJUNCT RESEARCH SCHOLAR - Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science, UQ, 2008-2020 Guest lecturer and knowledge broker - 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 (*Syngnathoides biaculeatus*): 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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|---|--|
| • Murray Darling Basin Authority | • Network of Environmental Social Sciences |
| • Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority | • UniQuest |
| • CSIRO (Commonwealth, Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) | • University of Tasmania |
| • Australian Institute of Marine Studies | • Queensland University of Technology |
| • Fisheries Research & Development Corporation | • University of Southern Queensland |
| • ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies | • Griffith University |
| • Northern Territory Government | • James Cook University |
| • Queensland (Qld) Health | • Monash University |
| • Qld Department of Education | • University of Melbourne |
| • Teach Queensland | • University of Technology Sydney |
| • Qld Department of Environment and Science | • Terrain Natural Resource Management |
| • Qld Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors | • River Basin Management Society |
| • Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries | • Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation |
| • Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority | • Queensland Farmers Federation |
| • Queensland Trade and Investment Queensland (Study Qld) | • Queensland Canegrowers |
| • Queensland Secondary Principals Association | • Sugar Research Australia |
| • Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre | • TierraMar |
| • P&Cs Queensland | • Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Club |
| • Australian Council for Educational Leaders | • Queensland Returned & Services League |
| • Scope TV, Channel 10 | • International Foundation for Integrated Care |
| • The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) | • CT:IQ |
| • Capturing Coral Reef and Related Ecosystem Services (CCRES) | • Welcoming Cities |
| • The University of Queensland | • 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