

Introducing the Science Panel

The Fitzroy Partnership Science Panel is made up of independent specialists with extensive experience and expertise. Together they provide independent review and rigorous scientific advice to deliver effective outcomes for partners and the community. The Science Panel is supported by a Science Leader.

The role of the Scientific Panel is to provide independent, comprehensive, unbiased scientific advice to the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health. This will ensure that the Partnership's monitoring and reporting activities are robust, practical, cost-effective and meet contemporary scientific standards. The panel will review Partnership activities and reports, identify linkages to relevant research activities and guide effective science communications.

Dr Eva Abal - Chair

Dr Eva Abal is a leader in integrated science strategy and a knowledge integrator/broker and is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the International River Foundation. Previous roles include Program Director of UQ Water at the University of Queensland, Chief Scientific Officer for the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Chief Scientist of the International Water Centre and Science Director of SEQ Healthy Waterways Partnership. Eva's scientific expertise and research interests include coordination of multidisciplinary projects, effective science communication, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic research planning, and ecophysiology of aquatic communities with an emphasis on biological indicators. Eva has a deep passion and commitment towards integrative pathways that bridge research/academia and managers/policy makers.



Dr Britta Schaffelke

Dr Britta Schaffelke leads the Research Program for A Healthy and Sustainable Great Barrier Reef at the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS). Britta's expertise is the research and management of environmental impacts in tropical marine ecosystems, especially those related to deteriorating water quality. Britta's and her teams' research has focused on the Great Barrier Reef, assessing condition and trends of coral reefs, and understanding their vulnerability to climate change and ocean acidification, especially in interaction with local and regional environmental pressures. Britta has been serving on a variety of expert committees to advise decision makers on how to address the water quality problems facing the GBR, and is currently a member of the Reef 2050 Independent Expert Panel.



Dr Roger Shaw

Dr Roger Shaw is an independent consultant who chairs the Independent Science Panel for the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan and is a member of the Independent Expert Panel for Reef 2050 Plan. He was formerly the founding CEO for the CRC for Coastal Zone Estuary and Waterway Management, which ran an active research program in central Queensland. Roger's expertise is in landscape soil and water processes (soil assessment, soil salinity and sodicity management, irrigation water quality guidelines and coastal management), adaptive management of natural resources, and synthesis of science.



Dr John Platten

John Platten is an aquatic ecologist based in Gladstone Central Queensland. His areas of expertise include water quality guidelines and objectives for waterways, identifying high ecological value aquatic habitats, environmental flows for estuaries and the relationships between fishery catch rates and river flows, fisheries regulation and line fishing. Impacts of climate change on fish and fisheries.



Dr Sue Vink

Dr Sue Vink is a Principal Research Fellow with the Sustainable Minerals Institute at the University of Queensland. Her expertise is in freshwater and marine biogeochemistry, including water quality impacts of mine discharge on aquatic ecosystem structure and function. Her recent research has included understanding mine site water and salt dynamics to facilitate water re-use; ecotoxicology of salts on macroinvertebrates in the Fitzroy; hydrological processes controlling salt fluxes in ephemeral stream systems; impacts of mine discharge on microbial community structure, function and ecological processes; and applications of isotopic and geochemical tracers in natural and mining systems to determine water balances, sources, mixing and biogeochemical processes.



Assoc Prof Helen Stratton

Associate Professor Helen Stratton is the Executive Manager for the Smart Water Research Centre on the Griffith University Gold Coast Campus and Deputy Director of the Australian Rivers Institute. Helen has over 20 years' experience in water and wastewater research acquiring an understanding of technical, microbiological, social and economic issues that the industry faces. Helen's key research interests are in the microbiology of activated sludge and other wastewater systems, microbial source tracking and improving water quality diagnostics. Her interests are also in the communication of science and transfer of knowledge. Helen has been a passionate volunteer for the Australian Water Association (AWA) being on the Queensland Branch committee from 1998-2006. She was the QLD Branch president (2004-2006) and was an AWA Director (2001-2003 and 2009-2015).



Dr Nicole Flint - Science Leader

Dr Nicole Flint is a Research Fellow in the School of Medical and Applied Sciences at CQUniversity and leads their Aquatic Ecology and Ecotoxicology research cluster. She has been with CQUniversity since 2011, researching primarily in the fields of monitoring, assessment and management of aquatic environments, and environmental indicators. Originally a fish biologist, Nicole's research now focuses more broadly on enhancing understanding and management of human use and impacts on aquatic species and ecosystems. Before joining CQUniversity, Nicole worked for the Australian Public Service for five years in fisheries and marine environmental management positions. Nicole is the Science Leader for the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health and in this role provides technical support to the Science Panel and maintains the Partnership's technical documents including the Program Design.



For more information on the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health, please contact Executive Officer Nathan Johnston
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