

# Carol Conacher

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**Carol is a seasoned professional manager, director and scientist with experience in both the public and private sector. Carol has worked for the State Government in both research and management, and has a strong and rigorous scientific background through her work as a scientist with CSIRO. For the past 22 years Carol has worked as a consultant and director of frc environmental. Having worked in a variety of roles she understands the differing perspectives of regulators, developers and community stakeholders. As a skilled mediator and negotiator, her strength is in bringing stakeholders together to broker effective solutions.**

Carol's clients include major companies in the resource sector, urban developers, the water sector, infrastructure providers and local and state government. She has a strong professional network including Tier 1 CEOs, agency officers, the legal fraternity, academics, procurement managers, consultants and engineers, with a focus on land and water management.

As a director of frc environmental, and as a senior manager in the company, Carol's responsibilities include:

- developing and implementing strategic plans to respond to market forces
- financial management
- business development
- developing and reporting on key performance indicators
- assessing and mitigating company and project risk, and
- ensuring the quality of our deliverables.

frc environmental has a turnover of approx. \$4M, employs 15 – 20 staff and operates both nationally and internationally.

Carol was the financial manager of frc environmental during a period of rapid change and growth and profit, and is also the director and secretary of two investment companies.

As an example of her work on the company Carol has overseen the successful implementation of accounting systems from the 'shoe box' method of the 1980's to a financial accounting system comprehensively integrated with project management and customer relationship management software. This required attention to behavioral changes to ensure uptake throughout the company. The successful implementation of these management systems has allowed the company to develop and use meaningful Key Performance Indicators that assist in tracking company performance, from financial, client and staff perspectives.

The commercial success of frc environmental over the past 34 years is due to the strong and strategic management of the Directors. In recognition of this, frc environmental was awarded the Small Business of the Year at the recent Redlands Business and Retail Awards.

Carol is passionate about the role of scientists in environmental management: distilling the true issues, and influencing management decisions. To this end she actively mentors scientists to become involved in the management domain, and to interact with developers and regulators.

In addition to mentoring, she has developed internal training and education programs, and speaks at conferences and seminars, with a focus on both educating other sectors, and assisting scientists speak and communicate.

Carol is also chairperson of two Body Corporates: positions that require extensive negotiation and mediation skills, financial management, an understanding of pertinent legislation, and risk management. She is currently overseeing the extensive successful renovation of one of these properties: a process that has entailed considerable mediation and negotiation skills.

From her experiences as a Board member, Body Corporate Chairperson, Company Director and Secretary, Carol has developed skills in risk assessment and financial management, and is able to assimilate and assess financial documents to gain insight into the financial drivers of an organisation. She also understands the role of social, legal, environmental, regulatory drivers, and the necessity to address these in decision making. Critically, Carol identifies where specialist knowledge is required, and does not hesitate to seek it.

## Professional Qualifications and Memberships

- Women on Boards WIT 2018
- Trained Mediator QLD Land Court
- CENVP Environmental Practitioner and Ecological Specialist
- Coxswain
- Bachelor of Science (Biology and Geography), The University of Sydney, 1981
- Active member of (in particular organizing and speaking at seminars and conferences):
  - Australian Marine Science Association
  - Queensland Environmental Law Association
  - Environment & Planning Law Association (NSW)
  - Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
  - Coral Reef Society
  - Women in Technology

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## Career Highlights

### Residential Development, Coomera

In this project Carol was engaged as a wetland ecologist, and worked with a multi-disciplinary team and with the owners of the property to create a development plan for a highly constrained area of agricultural land. This required extensive negotiation by Carol with Local and State regulators, which was underpinned by a sound understanding of the regulatory framework, and of the ecology of the area (the data). The process saw the successful approval of the development plans, with the property is currently being developed. Carol was able to negotiate successfully with the client and regulators, with both walking away with a successful outcome.

### Gladstone Ports Corp. Western Basin Dredge Technical Reference Panel.

Carol sat on the independent technical reference panel for this major infrastructure that advised management and the regulators regarding monitoring and compliance during dredging. Carol provided technical advice on novel approaches to monitoring, and contributed to the evaluation of likely causes of exceedances. The role required a detailed understanding of the underlying issues, the ability to influence decision making, through use of scientific judgement, and extensive liaison with State and Commonwealth regulators.

### Receiving Environment Monitoring Program (REMP) Development and Reporting, and Investigations.

Carol has worked with a number of clients in the resources sector including Glencore, Origin, Wesfarmers, Macarthur Coal, Rio Tinto BHP, John Holland, Xstrata and Santos to develop and / or implement monitoring programs to comply with their Environmental Authorities. Each of these need to be based on a sound understanding of the potential risks to the environment, to the developer and the requirements of the Regulators and stakeholders. She has also led a number of investigations of exceedances of trigger levels, and assisted clients develop management and mitigation strategies to reduce risk to themselves and to the environment.

### Port of Airlie EIS and Monitoring Program

Carol contributed to the original EIS for this project and then designed and implemented a monitoring program to determine if there were any impacts from dredging and reclamation on the surrounding aquatic environment. The area was considered highly sensitive, and was subject to intense scrutiny by the regulators and local community. Carol worked with the client to minimise impacts, and with the regulators to deliver a program that met their stringent requirements, while remaining cost effective for the client. The results of the 10-year monitoring program indicated there were no negative impacts on the surrounding aquatic community, other than a relatively small area of habitat loss.

### Nudgee Wetlands Ecotoxicology Study.

Carol was part of a multi-disciplinary team that helped Brisbane City Council manage the Nudgee landfill. Of particular concern was the 'smoking gun' of dieback of nearby mangroves. The study consisted of a detailed water quality analysis, investigations of the ecological health of mangroves and benthic macroinvertebrate communities, and an assessment of historical process in the region. Carol used her scientific knowledge, investigative and analytical skills to understand the complex issues associated with this project. While the concentration of ammonium was high in the drain surrounding the landfill, it was unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the surrounding environment, as only small volumes exited the drain, and these were rapidly diluted. Dieback in the mangroves near the landfill was likely to have resulted from regional climate conditions, as evidenced by dieback in similar situations in nearby areas, and a historical pattern of dieback in periods of low rainfall. Carol was able to communicate this simply and effectively to the managers and regulators, with the result that management of the landfill could focus on issues that would improve environmental outcomes.

### Waste Water Treatment Plants

Carol has assisted a number of clients, including Wide Bay Water, Mornington Island, Whitsunday Regional Council, Brisbane City Council and Tweed Shire Council, Kingfisher Bay resort, King Island Dairy, Byron Shire Council, and Gold Coast Water in the design and management of their waste water treatment plants to reduce impacts to the aquatic environment, and in the monitoring of potential impacts. This has required a sound understanding of the scientific issues involved, the requirements of regulators and of the client, and the ability to negotiate effectively.

### CSIRO Division of Fisheries

During her time with the CSIRO Carol worked in remote areas of the Gulf of Carpentaria on research funded by the commercial fishing industry. CSIRO provided a training ground for Carol to develop her analytical and research skill, and her commitment to the importance of making management decision on the basis of good science. During this time Carol liaised and worked with a range of commercial fishers, fisheries managers, and the local first peoples. Much of her time was spent at sea and diving in coastal inshore waters, amongst spectacular land and seascapes.

### NSW Fisheries

Carol began her career with the NSW Department of Fisheries. She was fortunate to be in a team led by a foresighted scientist, who understood environmental issues, the need for knowledge to manage them, and the will to work with developers and industry to achieve management goals.