



BIODIVERSITY TRUST

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015**

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Message from the Chair



On behalf of the Management Panel of the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust, I am pleased to present the second Annual Report on our activities. This report is a public documentation of the Trust's activities, ensuring our accountability to the organisation that funds the Trust and to the broader WA public.

The key areas of work this year have been running workshops on the three threatened species defined in the Tropicana EPBC Approval, and, based on the outcomes of those workshops, the Trust initiated a call for EOIs for first round of projects to be funded by the Trust. I look forward over the next 12 months to seeing the progress of the projects we fund.

I would like to formally acknowledge the strong and effective working relationship the Trust has with Anglo Gold Ashanti and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. As well, I would like to personally thank the members of the Technical

Advisory Panel for the many unpaid hours of work they have put in to the assessment of the grant application – your expertise, professionalism and advice is highly valued by the Panel.

The Great Victoria Desert is a very special place, and the Trust has an important role to play in adding to the knowledge and understanding of its ecology, in adding to the understanding of how to better manage the area, and in forming partnerships with other groups with an interest in the desert, especially the Traditional Owners. The Trust will also look to expand the formal membership of the Trust and seek other funding sources.

Dr Garry Middle

Executive Summary

The 2014 – 2015 Financial year (FY) saw the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust (the Trust) develop as an organisation and meet some important milestones.

The Management Panel held its first formal meeting in July 2014 and met a total of five times throughout the FY, allowing steady progress and decision-making on key issues in a timely and directed manner.

Significant milestones for the Trust included:

- Management Panel members and Trust Co-ordinator participating in a site visit to Tropicana and several of the nature reserves in the GVD
- The official launch of the Trust
- The launch of the Trust website
- Running three workshops on threatened species – the Marsupial Mole, Sandhill Dunnart and Malleefowl
- Successfully completing the first financial audit

Towards the end of the FY the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was established with five members. Each member has a diverse range of environmental experience. The TAP was established to help determine and assess the first round of funding to be allocated by the Trust. The TAP met twice in the 14/15 FY and were able to determine the priorities for funding and the process by which funding should occur. The result was the issuance of four public Expressions of Interest (EOIs) on 1 July 2015. These EOIs are expected to be reviewed and selected within the first 6 months of the 15/16 FY.

The Trust looks to the coming year with excitement as projects commence and more information is obtained on biodiversity in the GVD.

1. Introduction

The Trust represents a unique model for a biodiversity offset in Western Australia and Australia generally. 2014-2015 was the second year of operation for the Trust and saw the Trust move into a dynamic phase as it increased public awareness of the Great Victoria Desert (GVD) through a public launch, setting up a website and participating in large forums on threatened species, biodiversity and landscape scale initiatives. The Trust also held three workshops on three threatened species in the GVD – the Sandhill Dunnart, the Malleefowl and the Marsupial Mole. The workshops were a partnership with the Department of Parks and Wildlife (Parks and Wildlife) who hosted the workshops. The workshops were well attended with representatives participating from government departments (State and Federal), environmental consultancies, the mining industry, environmental not-for-profits and Traditional Owner Ranger groups. Experts from around Australia presented the latest information on the species.

The initiatives undertaken by the Trust have facilitated knowledge of biodiversity in the region and increased knowledge sharing about threatened species in the region. These activities align closely with the overall objectives of the Trust.

1.1 Trust Region

The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) classifies Australia's landscapes into 89 large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation and species information (Department of the Environment, 2015). The 89 bioregions are further refined to form 419 subregions which are more localised and homogenous geomorphological units in each bioregion (Department of the Environment, 2015).

The GVD IBRA region has six subregions which extend from approximately 200km east of Kalgoorlie to cover large areas of South Australia. The Trust region is comprised of the two most western subregions, known as Shield and Central. The entire GVD IBRA region is 42,375,084 hectares; the Trust region is 17,332,721 hectares¹. See Figure 1 for map of the region.

The Trust activities can occur outside this region on threatened species and communities of national environmental significance protected by the EPBC Act provided the activities are relevant and beneficial.

¹ GVD 1 (Shield) 4741854.4 hectares / 47418.5 sq km; GVD 2 (Central) 12590867.4 ha / 125908.7 sq km

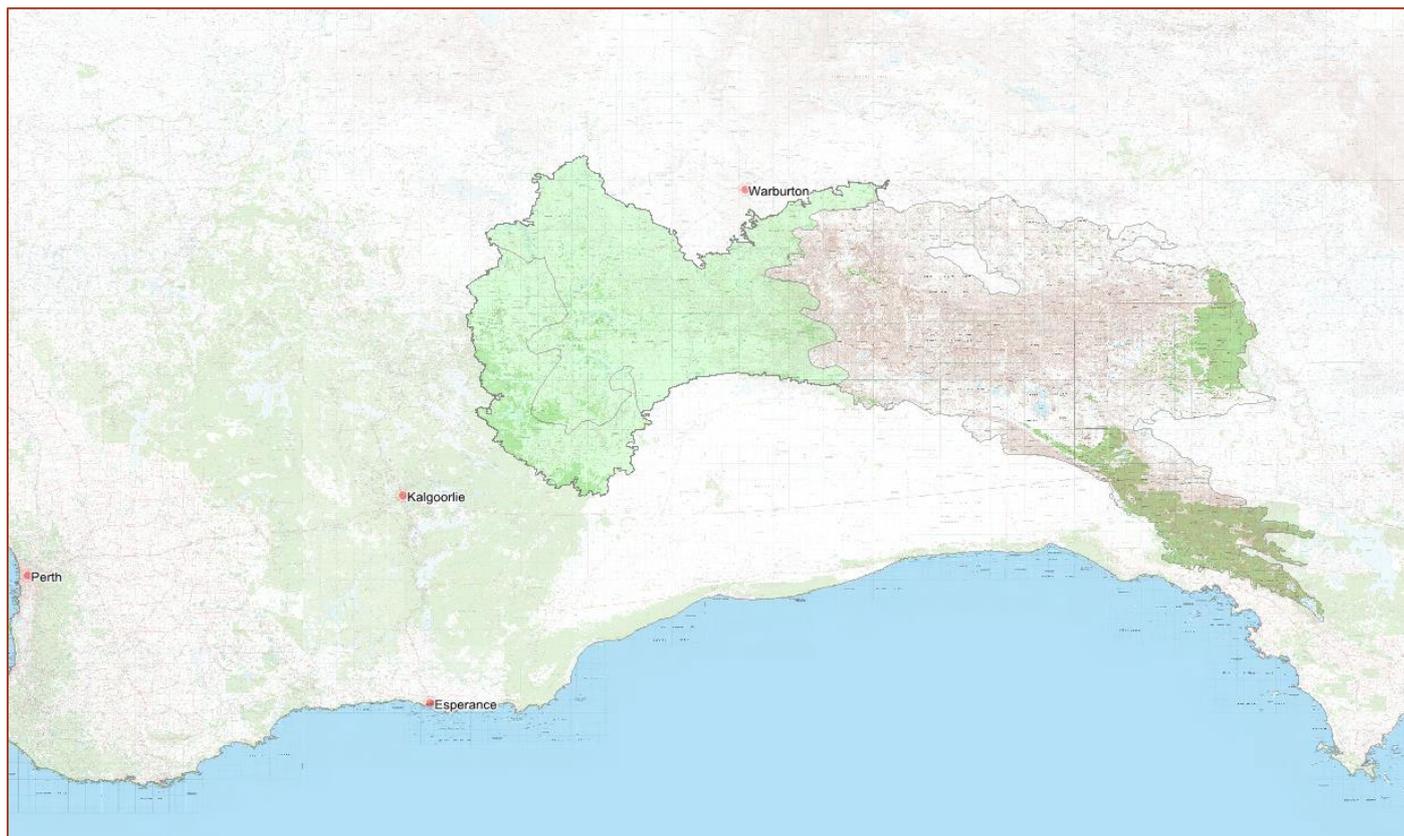


Figure 1 Great Victoria Desert. The pale green area represents the Trust area, with the whole of the Great Victoria Desert outlined as well.

2. Governance

The governance structure of the Trust is a key component of ensuring stakeholder support and the delivery of activities that align with the Project Plan approved by the DoE as part of the TGM EPBC approval 2008/4270. Figure 2 displays the reporting structure of the Trust.

The following sections describe the technical aspects of different components of the structure of the Trust.

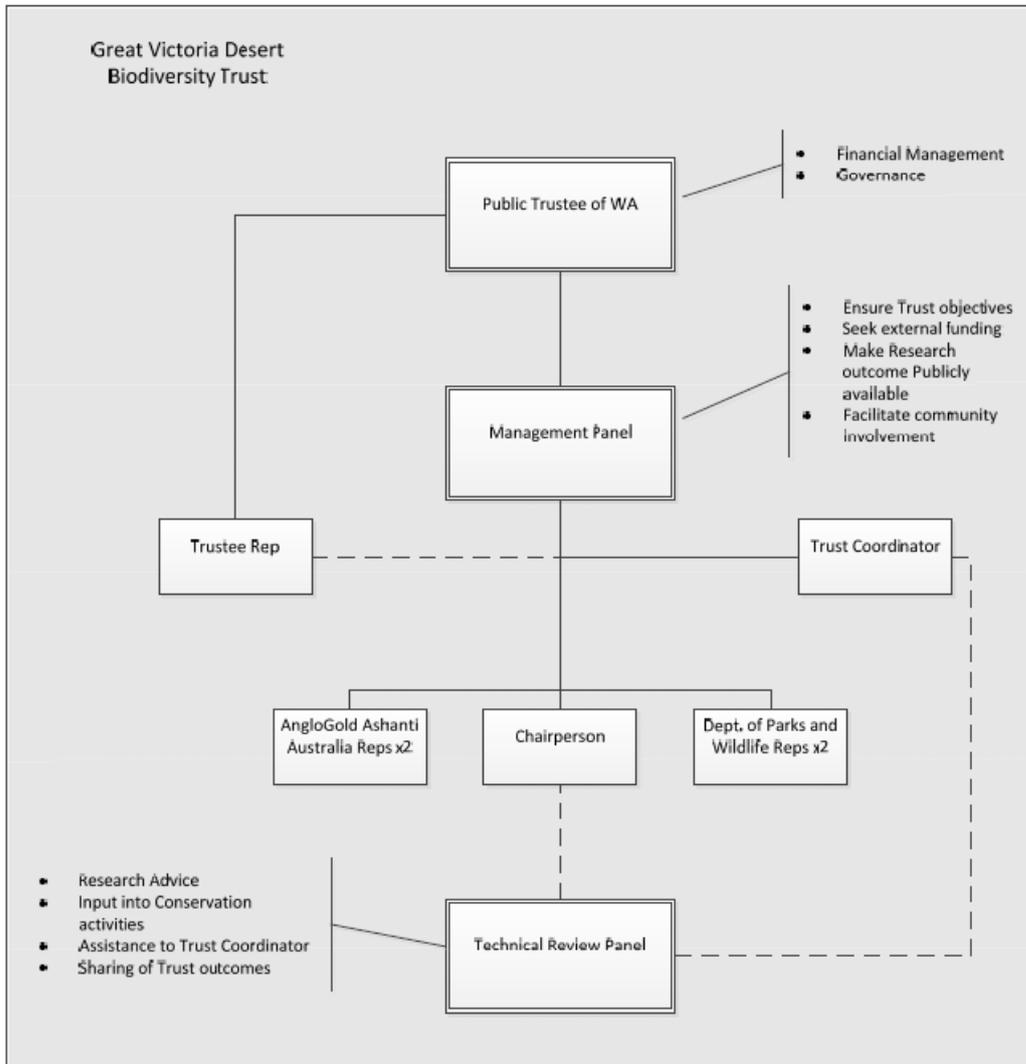


Figure 2 Structure of the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust

2.1 The Public Trustee

The Public Trustee has maintained the financial accountability of the Trust, ensuring that all the spending of the Trust account aligns with the Trust Deed. The Public Trustee maintains a role on the Management Panel, having a standing invitation to attend meetings. The Public Trustee has maintained a strong presence, attending all of the Management Panel meetings held in 2014/15 as well as providing guidance on investment strategies.

The Public Trustee worked closely with the nominated auditors, Australian Audit, to ensure all the financial documents of the Trust were clearly accounted for and that spending was being conducted in a suitable manner. The Trust passed the audit in April 2015. The Trust Manager continues to give strong guidance to the Trust to ensure it meets both financial and legal regulatory obligations.

2.2 Management Panel

The Management Panel met a total of five times throughout the 2014/15 financial year. Meetings occurred in:

- July 2014
- August 2014
- November 2014
- April 2015
- June 2015

The regularity of the meetings ensured steady progress was maintained on major Trust initiatives. In addition to the five meetings, in September 2014 several members of the Management Panel, including Dr Garry Middle, Mike Leroy and Ian Kealley, together with Belinda Bastow and Kathryn Sinclair, took part in a three day site visit. This trip included visiting the Queen Victoria Springs and Plumridge Lakes nature reserves. This site visit was an opportunity for the Management Panel members and the Trust Co-ordinator to gain an on-ground perspective of the landscape issues, the distances and the threats to biodiversity facing the region.

In June 2015 Mike Leroy announced that he would be retiring from AngloGold Ashanti Australia (AGAA) and standing down from the Management Panel. Mike brought a well-reasoned, objective focussed perspective to the Management Panel and played a key role in ensuring the Trust Co-ordinator was provided with a high level of support from AGAA. Norman Galli, AngloGold Ashanti Environmental Manager, replaced Mike on the Management Panel. The Trust formally thanked Mike for his hard work in the Management Panel and provided him with a picture of the GVD. The Trust also warmly welcomed Norman to the Management Panel and recognises the value of his knowledge and expertise (see Figure 3 for a snapshot of Norman's experience).

The Public Trustee Trust Manager and the Trust Co-ordinator attended each of the Management Panel meetings. The Chair of the Trust had weekly meetings with the Trust Co-ordinator to ensure the Trust maintained steady progress on key activities and maintained a strategic vision of the objectives of the Trust. See Appendix 1 for dates and attendance of Management Panel meetings.



Figure 3

Norm Galli

Manager Environment, AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd. Norm has significant operational, approvals and reporting experience in mining, and prior to that has worked extensively in formal conservation and the photographic safari business in Africa.

2.3 Technical Advisory Panel

In April 2015 the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was established. The selection of the members followed an Expression of Interest (EOI) that was sent out via a number of networks including LinkedIn and the Trust website. There was a high level of interest in the TAP positions and five members were selected based on their diverse skills and experience. Stephen van Leeuwen, as a member of the Management Panel, also has an advisory position on the TAP to ensure the decision making of the TAP aligns with the goals and objectives of the Management Panel.

The central purposes of the TAP are to:

- (i) Provide feedback on the scope of research proposals, on-ground environmental or conservation activities and draft research reports.
- (ii) Assist the Trust Coordinator with assessing research proposals, identify external funding opportunities and compile research grants.
- (iii) Facilitate the sharing of outcomes and insights obtained through activities facilitated via the Trust.

In the 2014/15 FY the TAP met two times. During the first meeting, the TAP established the process for selecting and prioritising projects for the first round of funding. These were determined based on the outcomes from the three threatened species workshops. The priority projects determined were:

- (i) Sandhill Dunnart Survey and Monitoring protocol (public expression on interest)
- (ii) Sandhill Dunnart Survey Design (public expression on interest)
- (iii) Adaptive Management Partnership Project (public expression on interest)
- (iv) Malleefowl records collation (public expression on interest)
- (v) Malleefowl GVD Survey and Monitoring Protocol (approached tender: Dr Joe Benshemesh)
- (vi) Malleefowl refuge areas Project (approached tender: Jeff Turpin)
- (vii) Fire Mapping project (approached tender: WA Department of Parks and Wildlife)

3. Trust Activities

3.1 Trust Aims

The overall aim of the GVD Biodiversity Trust is to achieve the following outcomes:

- (i) Develop a Bioregional Management Plan for the Great Victoria Desert bioregions 1 and 2 (being the Trust Area);
- (ii) Facilitate and/or undertake priority research and development identified in the Bioregional Management Plan at the landscape level and into threatened species including the Sandhill Dunnart, Southern Marsupial Mole and Malleefowl;
- (iii) Fund on-ground environmental and conservation management at the landscape level, with emphasis on net conservation benefits to threatened species including the Sandhill Dunnart, Southern Marsupial Mole and Malleefowl;
- (iv) Facilitate Indigenous involvement in land management and conservation activities in support of the above objectives.

These aims reflect the objectives specified in Condition 6 of the EPBC approval 2008/4270 for the Tropicana Gold Mine.

These aims have been integrated in to the Project Plan submitted to DoE in 2011 and the Trust Deed executed in 2013. The Project Plan is currently in the process of being updated, as progress is made on the best approach to achieving the above outcomes.

3.2 Milestones and Activities

The Trust met several important milestones in the 2014/15 FY.

Management Panel meetings

In July 2014 the Management Panel met for the first time. Dr Garry Middle met separately with each of the Panel members ahead of the first meeting to discuss their individual priorities, their understanding of their role on the Management Panel and to discuss the vision and objectives of the Trust. By drawing on his experience on other boards, Garry was able to clearly outline the role and responsibilities of each Management Panel member and how the Panel could work together to achieve strong outcomes for the Trust. Throughout 2014/15 the Management Panel met several times, including a site visit to the GVD (see Section 2.2).

Workshops

The Trust successfully ran three workshops on the threatened species defined in the Tropicana EPBC Approval. These were all a partnership with the Department of Parks and Wildlife and were held at the Parks and Wildlife offices. All workshops were well attended with between 40 and 60 participants at each workshop. Attendees included Federal and State government representatives, environmental consultants, not-for-profit organisations, universities, the mining industry and Traditional Owners from ranger groups. All workshops were followed by networking drinks to facilitate the sharing of experience and strengthen relationships between diverse groups.

The first workshop, held on 11 November 2014, was about the Sandhill Dunnart (*Sminthopsis psammophila*). Experts came from around Australia to deliver presentations on this little known species. Expert presenters were:

- Dr Glen Gaikhorst
- Dr Katherine Moseby
- Dr Sue Carthew
- Dr Amanda Mclean

The second and third workshops were held on consecutive days to allow people travelling from different parts of the country were able to attend both workshops.

The Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) workshop, held on 24 November 2014, included existing knowledge in WA, the state of knowledge nationally and the state of knowledge in the GVD. The presenters all described the threats they perceived as having the greatest impact on the Malleefowl as well as the most significant gaps in existing knowledge about the species.

Expert presenters were:

- Dr Blair Parsons
- Dr Joe Benshemesh
- Dr Rick Southgate
- Dr Scott Thompson
- Liam Mulcahy

The workshop on the Marsupial Mole (Southern - *Notoryctes typhlops* and Northern - *Notoryctes caurinus*) was slightly shorter in duration than the other workshops, due to the limited knowledge on this elusive and rarely seen species. It was held on 25 November 2014.

Expert presenters were:

- Dr Joe Benshemesh
- Chris Knuckey
- Dr Graham Thompson

Launch of the Trust

The Trust was officially launched on the evening of the 25th of November, 2014. At an event held at the Botanical Café, Kings Park, invitees from government agencies, environmental consultancies, universities, not-for-profit groups, peak bodies, industry representatives and Traditional owners socialised and listened to speakers highlighting the development of the Trust and the importance of increasing knowledge about biodiversity in the GVD.

Presenters were:

- Rod Garrett, Noongar Traditional Owner
- Mike Erickson, Senior Vice President Australia, AngloGold Ashanti
- Dr Garry Middle, Chair of the Trust
- Dr Paul Vogel, Chair of the Environmental Protection Agency

Launch of the Trust website

On the same day as the Trust launch, the website for the Trust was launched. This website is a key platform for the Trust. All the outcomes of projects funded by the Trust will be released publicly on the website. The website is also a key tool for the Trust to disseminate information on the GVD, update recent activities of the Trust and provide information on threatened species in the GVD. For more information, visit the website: www.gvdbiodiversitytrust.org.au.

Selection of TAP members and determination of first funding priorities

On the 1 March the Trust released an EOI for Technical Advisory Panel members. There was a high degree of interest in these roles and the Management Panel was happy with the high calibre of applicants selected. The Management Panel met in early April 2015 and selected the applicants.

The successful applicants come from a variety of backgrounds with cumulative experience in the mining industry, government, research institutions, environmental consultancies, the WA museum and in the not-for-profit sector. The diverse range of experience ensures that all decision making is multifaceted and will take into account the needs of different stakeholders.

Stephen van Leeuwen, from Parks and Wildlife, is an Advisor to the TAP. Stephen brings a wealth of experience on government processes, engaging with Traditional Owners, biodiversity management and on decision-making for funding applications. For more information on the TAP see section 2.3.

The TAP reviewed the outcomes of the three threatened species workshop, focussing on the Sandhill Dunnart and the Malleefowl, due to advice from the Department of the Environment about a review into status of the Marsupial Mole. The outcome was the public release for four Expressions of Interest. Three of the projects focussed on establishing a strong foundation for future research and on-ground activities for the Sandhill Dunnart and the Malleefowl. One project, named the Adaptive Management Partnership Project, will focus on the necessary role of partnerships and collaborations to achieve the strongest outcomes for biodiversity in landscape scale projects. The Trust hopes this project will lead to strong partnerships with Traditional Owners, particularly ranger groups, in the region and achieve strong, sustainable on-ground actions. The successful proponent for each of these projects is expected to be selected early in the 2015/16 FY.

Successful completion of the first audit

In April 2015, Australian Audit advised the Trust that the first audit had been completed. The auditor reported the audit was a success and that no material weaknesses in the accounting and internal control systems were detected.

3.3 Stakeholder engagement

Ongoing stakeholder engagement remains an important part of the Trust's activities. In the 2014/15 FY the Trust Co-ordinator represented the Trust at a range of important events including:

- Valuing the Deserts workshop run by the Nature Conservancy
- The Fifth National Malleefowl Forum in Dubbo
- The Outback Papers launch run by PEW
- The Landscape Scale Projects Network run by Rangelands NRM

In 2014/15 the Trust also became part of the:

- Landscape Scale Projects Leadership group
- Ten Deserts Initiative – Working Group

The Trust also contributed to the 'Around the Mounds' – a national publication which disseminates information on Malleefowl around Australia.

In 2015/16 the Trust will continue to make collaboration a central priority. The Trust also will actively contact industry stakeholders in the region with the aim of expanding the mandate and membership of the Trust.

4. Finances, Administration and Allocation of Funds

4.1 Finances

Income sources

The major income sources for the Trust were the annual contribution provided by the TJV for the amount of \$309,040. This amount is calculated based on the cleared footprint reported to the DMP by the TJV, on a formula of: an annual fee of \$100,000 plus \$80 per hectare (HA) of cleared footprint. The cleared footprint reported was 2,613 HA.

In addition the Trust received a total of \$39,816.16 in interest from existing funds. Based on the current investment type, the Trust fund attracts a 3% interest rate which is credited on 1 March and 1 September each year.

Major Expenditures

Major expenditure of the Trust was associated with the salary of the Trust Co-ordinator. Other major expenditures were:

- Expenditures for the development of the website and logo
- Expenditures for the three threatened species workshops
- Costs of the audit and financial report
- Costs of the Public Trustee administering the funds

Appendix 2 contains a breakdown of all expenditure in the 2014/15 FY.

AngloGold Ashanti Australia provided funding for the Launch of the Trust including providing costs of a large standing banner.

4.2 Administration

The administration budget for the Trust is set at a maximum of 20% of the budget of the Trust. AGAA provides in-kind administrative support for the Trust through the provision of the following services and activities:

- HR Services such as payroll management, employment contract services and general HR support for the Trust Co-ordinator.
- General office administration such as IT, mobile phone and contract, office space and general office support.
- Flights, accommodation and access to vehicles at Tropicana as appropriate.
- Legal Service for agreements and contracts.

This in-kind support represents a considerable reduction in the administration expenses that would otherwise be incurred by the Trust Co-ordinator and for administration of the Management Panel members / meetings.

4.3 Funding

As part of the Co-ordinator and Chairpersons roles, efforts will be made to obtain additional funding for project and on-ground environmental and/or conservation activities through grants, contributions

by other mining/industry partners and explorers in the region and through other government programs. During the reporting period no other external funding was obtained.

Funding activities are expected to increase as the Trust establishes its reputation, commences research and on-ground activities, and develops administration structures which support additional funding mechanisms. These mechanisms may include investigations into obtaining deductible gift recipient (DGR) status and becoming incorporated in Western Australia.

5. Future Vision

The Trust has made strong progress in the 2014/15 FY. In 2015/16 the Trust aims to build on this progress through the commencement of funding for activities on the key threatened species in the region. The projects funded will help to set the foundation for future work done on these species in the region; ensuring that all work is conducted in a consistent, scientifically rigorous manner.

Through the proposed Adaptive Management Partnership project, the Trust aims to leverage the strengths and skills of different organisations to achieve the strongest possible outcomes for both biodiversity and the Traditional Owners in the region. The Trust believes that Traditional Owners are best placed to utilise their skills and experience, to conduct work on species in a sustainable manner.

The Trust will continue to approach other companies operating in the region, to gain their support for this integrated platform and as possible partners, joining the Management Panel of the Trust and sharing their expertise and priorities.

Appendix 1.

Record of Management Panel Meetings

Dates and Attendance

15 July 2014

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Mike LeRoy	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Cliff Henrisson	Public Trustee
Belinda Bastow	Tropicana Joint Venture - AGAA
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT Co-ordinator

14 August 2014

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Mike LeRoy	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Anderson	Public Trustee
Andrea Maxey	AngloGold Ashanti Australia (selected components of meeting)
Belinda Bastow	Tropicana Joint Venture – AGAA (selected components of meeting)
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT Co-ordinator

9-11 September 2014
Site Visit to GVD and Nature reserves

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Mike LeRoy	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Belinda Bastow	Tropicana Joint Venture – AGAA
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT Co-ordinator

26 November 2014

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Mike LeRoy	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Anderson	Public Trustee
Stephen Taylor (Investment Analyst)	Public Trustee (first item of meeting only)
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT Co-ordinator

1 April 2015

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman (via teleconference)	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Norm Galli (AGAA invitee)	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Anderson	Public Trustee
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT Co-ordinator

22 June 2015

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley (via teleconference)	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Norm Galli (AGAA invitee)	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Anderson	Public Trustee
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT Co-ordinator