



BIODIVERSITY TRUST

**ANNUAL REPORT
2015-16**

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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 third 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 allocating around \$122,862 in funds to carry out a range of research projects including two threatened species, making substantial progress towards the preparation of a Bioregional Management Plan / Biodiversity Conservation Plan, and establishing the basis for a working relationship with the key stakeholders in the GVD.

I would like to personally thank the members of the Management Panel for their wisdom, the Technical Advisory Panel for the many unpaid hours of work they have put in providing robust advice to the Panel, and to the

Trust's Operations Manager Kathryn Sinclair for her on-going hard work and commitment to the objectives of the Trust.

I would like to formally acknowledge the strong and effective working relationship the Trust has with AngloGold Ashanti Australia and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

The Great Victoria Desert is a remote and a very special place, and the Trust looks forward to forming positive partnerships with groups with an interest in the desert, especially the Traditional Owners, with the aim of adding to the knowledge of the ecology of the desert to enable sustainable management, and to fund on-the-ground projects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garry Middle'.

Dr Garry Middle

Executive Summary

The 2015 – 2016 Financial year (FY) saw the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust (the Trust) launch its first round of Expressions of Interest for projects on threatened species and adaptive management in the Shield and Central regions of the Great Victoria Desert (GVD).

The Management Panel met a total of five times throughout the FY, allowing steady progress and decision-making on key issues in a timely and directed manner. The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) which was established late in the 2014 – 15 FY also met five times in the 2015 – 16 FY and played a key role in providing expert guidance to the Management Panel.

Significant milestones for the Trust included:

- The successful advertisement, selection and completion of the Malleefowl records collation project, the Sandhill Dunnart survey and monitoring guidelines and Sandhill Dunnart Baseline survey
- The successful advertisement, selection and establishment of the Adaptive Management Partnership project in which the Trust has partnered with Rangelands NRM, Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation, Central Desert Native Title Services, Greening Australia, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and Conservation Management for the delivery a regional approach to biodiversity conservation
- The creation of a 'Knowledge Hub' for information on the region
- The creation of the first draft of the Bioregional Plan, now called the Biodiversity Conservation Plan
- The establishment of a bi-annual newsletter for the Trust
- The delivery of a presentation to the Goldfields Environmental Management Group biennial workshop
- Successfully completing the second financial audit

With the outcomes of the first round of projects on threatened species, the Trust has increased knowledge on the distribution of Malleefowl across the region. Through the Sandhill Dunnart survey and monitoring guidelines the Trust has facilitated survey work on the Sandhill Dunnart which, hopefully, will lead to greater success in the detection and trapping of Sandhill Dunnarts by anyone understanding work for the species. The Sandhill Dunnart baseline survey will guide the Trust in funding future surveys across the region to determine if Sandhill Dunnarts are present at currently undetected or unsurveyed areas of the Shield and Central areas of the GVD.

The Adaptive Management Partnership (the Partnership) commenced activities by completing the first draft of the Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the Shield and Central regions of the GVD. This document provides a 'State of Knowledge' for the region with all partners contributing their detailed knowledge of the region to inform the document. In the 2016 – 17 FY the Partnership is set to implement the first on-ground projects across the region.

The Trust looks to the coming year with excitement as more 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. It was established as the central part of an offset package for the Tropicana Joint Venture (AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd 70% and manager, Independence Group NL 30%) with the aim of delivering benefits to threatened species, landscape scale biodiversity and the communities in the region.

2015-16 was the third year of operation for the Trust and saw the Trust commission a number of projects focussing both on threatened species in the region and achieving landscape scale changes through planning.

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 to species and biodiversity within the region.

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

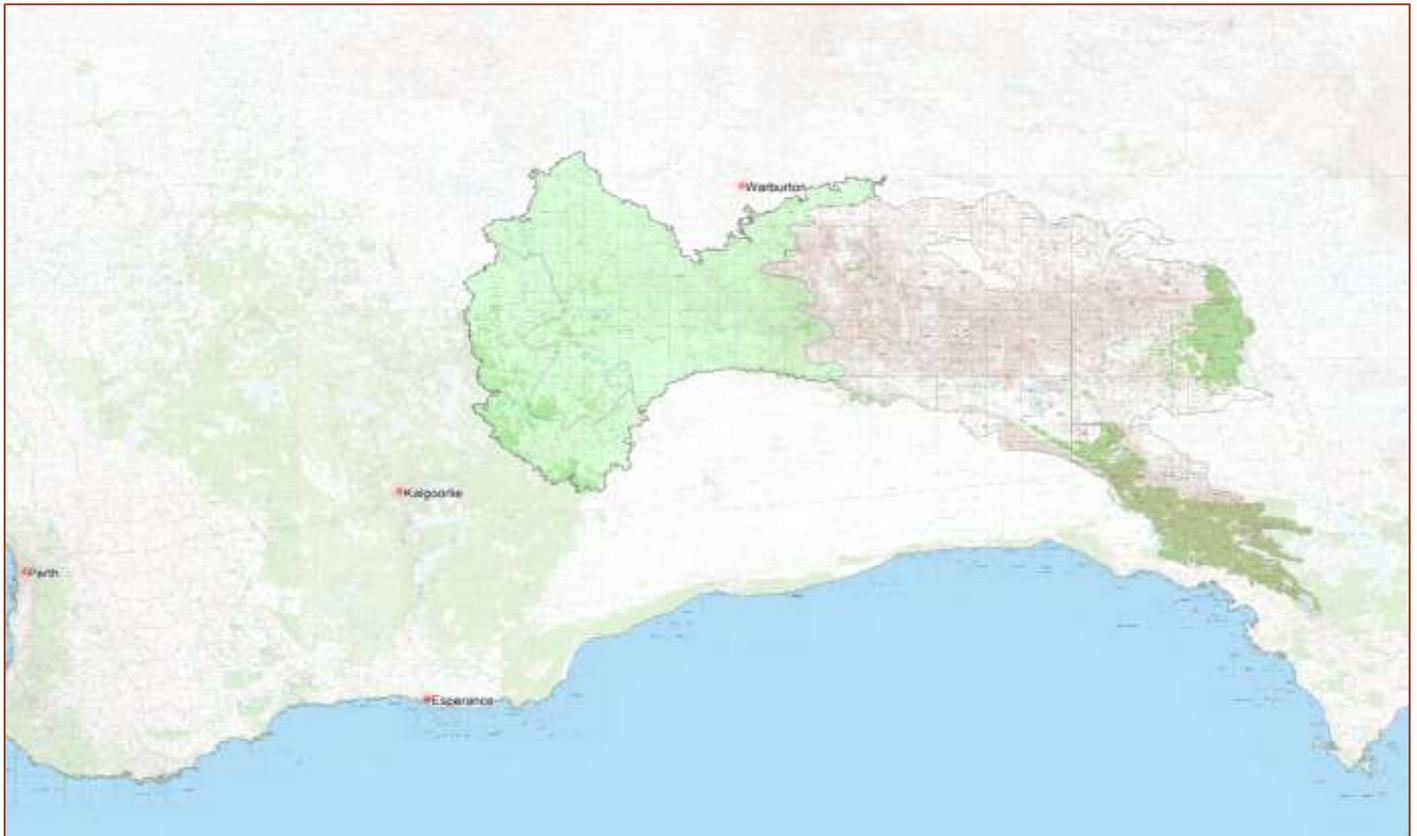


Figure 1 Great Victoria Desert. The pale green area represents the Trust area, with the whole of the Great Victoria Desert outlined as well.

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 Department of the Environment (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.

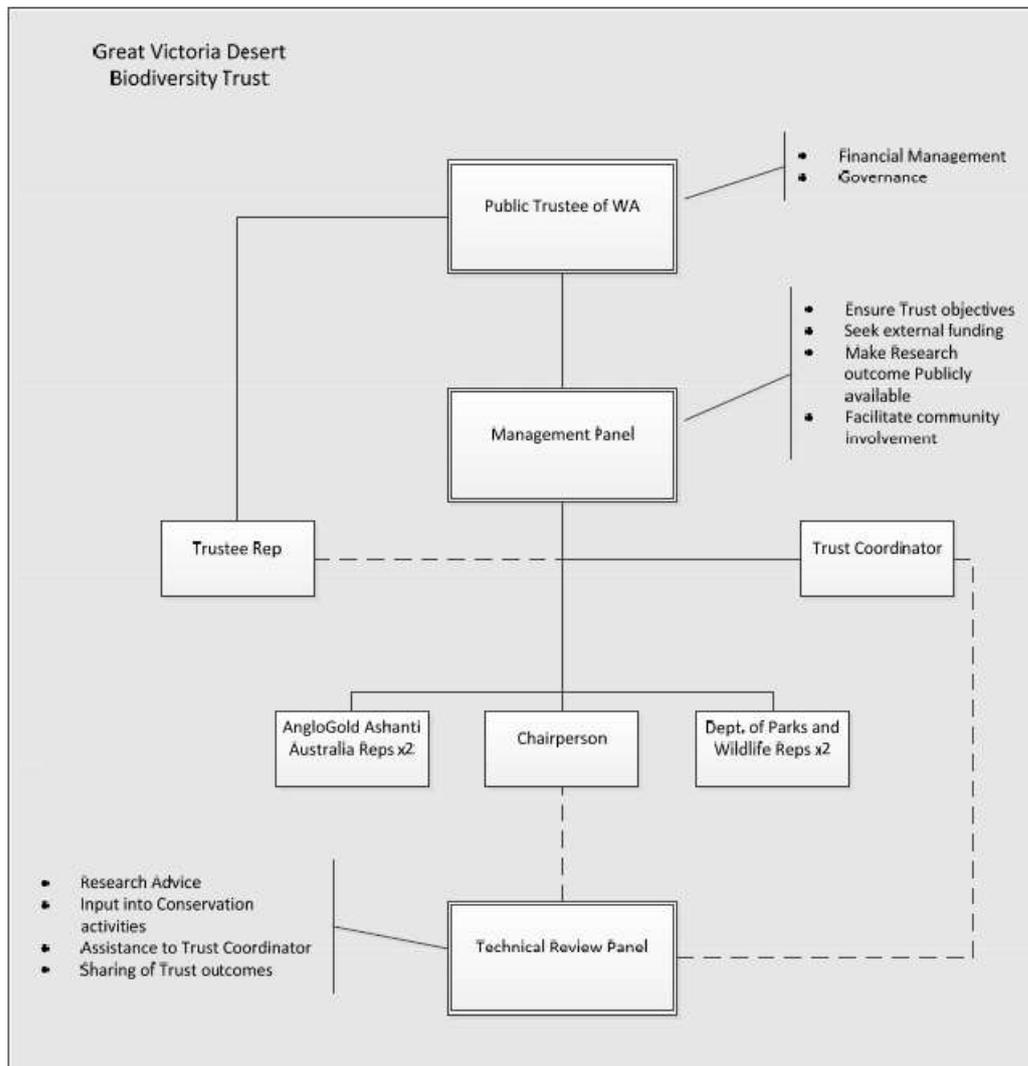


Figure 2 Structure of the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust

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 the majority of the Management Panel meetings held in 2015/16 as well as providing guidance on taxation.

The Public Trustee worked closely with the nominated auditors, Ernst and Young, 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 December 2015. The Public Trustee 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 2015/16 financial year. Meetings occurred in:

- September 2015
- February 2016
- April 2016 (two occasions)
- June 2016

The regularity of the meetings ensured steady progress was maintained on major Trust initiatives.

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.

2.3 Technical Advisory Panel

In April 2015 the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was established. The membership of the TAP remained unchanged in the 2015 – 2016 FY.

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 2015/16 FY the TAP met five times (see Appendix 2 for dates and attendance of Technical Advisory Panel meetings). Meetings occurred in:

- August 2015 (on two occasions)
- September 2015
- April 2016
- June 2016

The meetings in 2015 lead to the ranking of proponents for the expressions of interest projects, advertised in June 2015. The TAP provided their recommendations to the Management Panel for consideration. These recommendations included: the selection of the Department of Parks and Wildlife as the recommended proponent for Malleefowl records collation project; the recommendation for the Department of Parks and Wildlife to combine the two Sandhill Dunnart projects (Sandhill Dunnart Survey and Monitoring protocol and Sandhill Dunnart Baseline Survey Design) under one project design and to have experts (Glen Gaikhorst and Jeff Turpin) review the documents. For the Adaptive Management Partnership project a consortium consisting of Rangelands NRM, Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation, Central Desert Native Title Services, Greening Australia, Department of Parks and Wildlife and Conservation Management were selected as the recommended proponent.

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 has updated and approved in August 2015 to mark the direction the Trust was undertaking since its commencement of activities in late 2013.

3.2 Milestones and Activities

The Trust met several important milestones in the 2015/16 FY:

Four projects advertised and selected

In July 2015 the Trust advertised four expressions of interest:

- Project 1: Sandhill Dunnart Survey and Monitoring Protocol
- Project 2: Sandhill Dunnart - Baseline survey design
- Project 3: Adaptive Management Partnership
- Project 4: Malleefowl Records in the Great Victoria Desert

Proponents had until the 31st of July to complete their applications. After the submission period closed, the Trust had received over 40 applications across all the four projects. After a rigorous assessment process undertaken by the TAP, recommendations were provided to the Management Panel. The Management Panel assessed the recommendations and chose to accept all recommendations.

The Sandhill Dunnart Projects (Projects 1 and 2) were combined based on the recommendation from the TAP and was completed within a five month timeframe, as per negotiated contract outcomes. The successful proponent was Department of Parks and Wildlife. They were reviewed by Jeff Turpin and Glen Gaikhorst as subject matter experts. The Malleefowl records project (Project 4) was completed in a three month timeframe, as per negotiated contract outcomes. The successful proponent was Department of Parks and Wildlife. All project reports are publically available on the Trust's website: www.gvdbiodiversitytrust.org.au.

The Adaptive Management Partnership project was awarded to a consortium of groups who represented different stakeholders in the region. The six organisations in the consortium were:

- Rangelands NRM
- Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation
- Central Desert Native Title Services
- Greening Australia
- Department of Parks and Wildlife, and
- Conservation Management.

The first project requested by the Trust to the group was the delivery of the Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the Shield and Central subregions (described below). On June 3 2016 the Adaptive Management Partnership held the first meeting of the partners. Attendees included Pila Nguru Aboriginal Corporation, a Yilka representative, Rangelands NRM, Greening Australia, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Conservation Management, members of the Trust's Management Panel and the Trust's Operations Manager. The meeting was facilitated by Ann Maree O'Callaghan and Maree Gooch from Strategy Matrix.

Completion of the first draft of the Bioregional Conservation Plan

Through the Adaptive Management Partnership, the Trust commissioned Rangelands NRM to complete the Bioregional Plan, now called the Biodiversity Conservation Plan for Shield and Central subregions. Completing a Bioregional Plan is a requirement for the Trust under the EPBC Approval 2008/4270. The first draft of the Bioregional Plan was provided under this contract in March 2016. The document is due to be finalised in August 2016.

Creation of the Knowledge Hub

In order to capture and disseminate reports and information on the Great Victoria Desert, the Trust commissioned Gaia Resources to create a 'Knowledge Hub' for the region. This Knowledge Hub is a webpage on the Trust's website and contains a large number of available reports on different aspects of biodiversity that have been commissioned in the region. These reports are presented in two different forms 1) as point sources of information, outlining the document details, and 2) as polygons, to capture the area covered in the report.

The map also contains spatial layers relevant to land management and land tenure. The aim of the Knowledge Hub is to pull together existing information and present it in a visually appealing, publically accessible format. The aim is to regularly update the Hub to ensure it stays current.

Funding for the Northern Australian Fire Information Project

Rangelands NRM coordinated the extension of the Northern Australian Fire Information (NAFI) from the north of Australia to now include the Western Australian Rangelands, which includes the Great Victoria Desert. This system provides very accurate records on fire scars across the region. The Trust aims to utilise this information for guiding future surveys for threatened species such as the Sandhill Dunnart and Malleefowl which are often detected in long unburnt areas.

Promotion of the Trust Co-ordinator to Operations Manager

At the cessation of the Trust Co-ordinator's initial two year contract, the Management Panel made the decision to offer the Trust Co-ordinator a three year extension and a change of title to Operations Manager (Co-ordinator) to reflect the role and its position requirements.

Presentation on Offsets and the Trust Model at the GEMG

The Trust was invited to give the first presentation of a three day workshop held by the Goldfields Environmental Management Group. The presentation followed the opening address by the Governor General of Western Australia, her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AC. The presentation titled 'Biodiversity Offsets – a new approach' was well received and a copy is available on the Trust's website.

3.3 Stakeholder engagement

Ongoing stakeholder engagement remains an important part of the Trust's activities. In the 2015/16 FY the Trust's Operations Manager represented the Trust at a range of important events including:

- The launch of the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute
- The Australian Wildlife Management Society Conference
- The Golden Gecko awards
- The Goldfields Environmental Management Workshop
- The Landscape Scale Projects Network run by Rangelands NRM
- The Ten Deserts Initiative – Working Group
- Buffel Free GVD (Ten Deserts) – Working Group

In 2016/17 the Trust will continue to make collaboration and partnerships 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.
- Interest on funds held of \$43,539.90. 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 Operations Manager (Coordinator). Other major expenditures were:

- Expenditures for the combined Sandhill Dunnart Project plus review of \$42,754
- Expenditures for the Malleefowl records collation project of \$23,100
- Expenditures for the Biodiversity Conservation Plan \$17,848
- Expenditure on the NAFI – fire scar mapping project of \$22,000
- Expenditures for the Knowledge Hub project of \$11,880
- Expenditures for the Adaptive Management Partners workshop of \$5,280

- Costs of the audit and financial report of \$5,665.00
- Costs of the Public Trustee administering the funds of \$10,053.02

Appendix 3 contains a breakdown of all expenditures in the 2015/16 FY.

AngloGold Ashanti Australia provided funding for the Christmas celebration of the Trust which was held at the Chamber of Minerals and Energy.

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 Operations Manager (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 Operations Manager (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 2015-16 FY one grant application was lodged by the Operations Manager for the AMP Employment Boost program. The results of this application are still pending.

The Operations Manager and members of the Management Panel have also had discussions regarding offsets for mining operations. These discussions have primarily been with Vimy Resources, Lost Sand representatives and Gold Road resources representatives. These discussions are ongoing.

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 2015/16 FY. In 2016/17 the Trust aims to build on this progress through the commencement of on-ground activities in the region and by extending research into threatened species through increased surveys.

Through the Adaptive Management Partnership project, the Trust has begun the process of utilising 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.

2015-16 Management Panel Meetings

Dates and Attendance

21 September 2015

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Norm Galli	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Andersen	Public Trustee
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT
<i>Invited guests (attended a section of the meeting)</i>	
Piers Higgs	Gaia Resources
Gaye Mackenzie	Rangelands NRM
Chris Curnow	Rangelands NRM

10 February 2016

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Norm Galli	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Andersen	Public Trustee
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT
<i>Invited guests (attended a section of the meeting)</i>	
Quinton Clasen	Rangelands NRM
Chris Curnow	Rangelands NRM

8 April 2016

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Andersen	Public Trustee
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT
<i>Apologies</i>	
Norm Galli	AngloGold Ashanti Australia

27 April 2016

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Norm Galli	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT
<i>Invited guests (attended a section of the meeting)</i>	
John Millikan	AGAA (Community and Land access manager)
<i>Apologies</i>	
Kris Andersen	Public Trustee

23 June 2016

Dr Garry Middle	Chair
Ian Kealley	Parks and Wildlife
Stephen van Leeuwen	Parks and Wildlife
Nerilee Rockman	AngloGold Ashanti Australia
Kris Andersen	Public Trustee
Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT
<i>Invited guests (attended a section of the meeting)</i>	
John Millikan	AGAA (Community and Land access manager)
<i>Apologies</i>	
Norm Galli	AngloGold Ashanti Australia

Appendix 2.

2015-16 Technical Advisory Panel Meetings

Dates and Attendance

6 August 2015

Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT coordinator / TAP Chair
Garry Middle	GVDBT Chair
Stephen van Leeuwen	GVDBT management board / TAP advisor
Blair Parsons	GVDBT TAP member
Belinda Bastow	GVDBT TAP member
Katherine Moseby	GVDBT TAP member
Ryan Ellis	GVDBT TAP member

21 August 2015

Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT coordinator / TAP Chair
Stephen van Leeuwen	GVDBT management board / TAP advisor
Blair Parsons	GVDBT TAP member
Belinda Bastow	GVDBT TAP member
Katherine Moseby	GVDBT TAP member
Ryan Ellis	GVDBT TAP member

1 September 2015

Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT coordinator / TAP Chair
Stephen van Leeuwen	GVDBT management board / TAP advisor
Blair Parsons	GVDBT TAP member
Belinda Bastow	GVDBT TAP member
Ryan Ellis	GVDBT TAP member
<i>Apologies</i>	
Katherine Moseby	GVDBT TAP member

1 April 2016

Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT coordinator / TAP Chair
Katherine Moseby	GVDBT TAP member
Blair Parsons	GVDBT TAP member
Belinda Bastow	GVDBT TAP member
Ryan Ellis	GVDBT TAP member

17 June 2016

Kathryn Sinclair	GVDBT coordinator / TAP Chair
Stephen van Leeuwen	GVDBT management board / TAP advisor
Blair Parsons	GVDBT TAP member
Belinda Bastow	GVDBT TAP member
Katherine Moseby	GVDBT TAP member
Ryan Ellis	GVDBT TAP member