Introduction

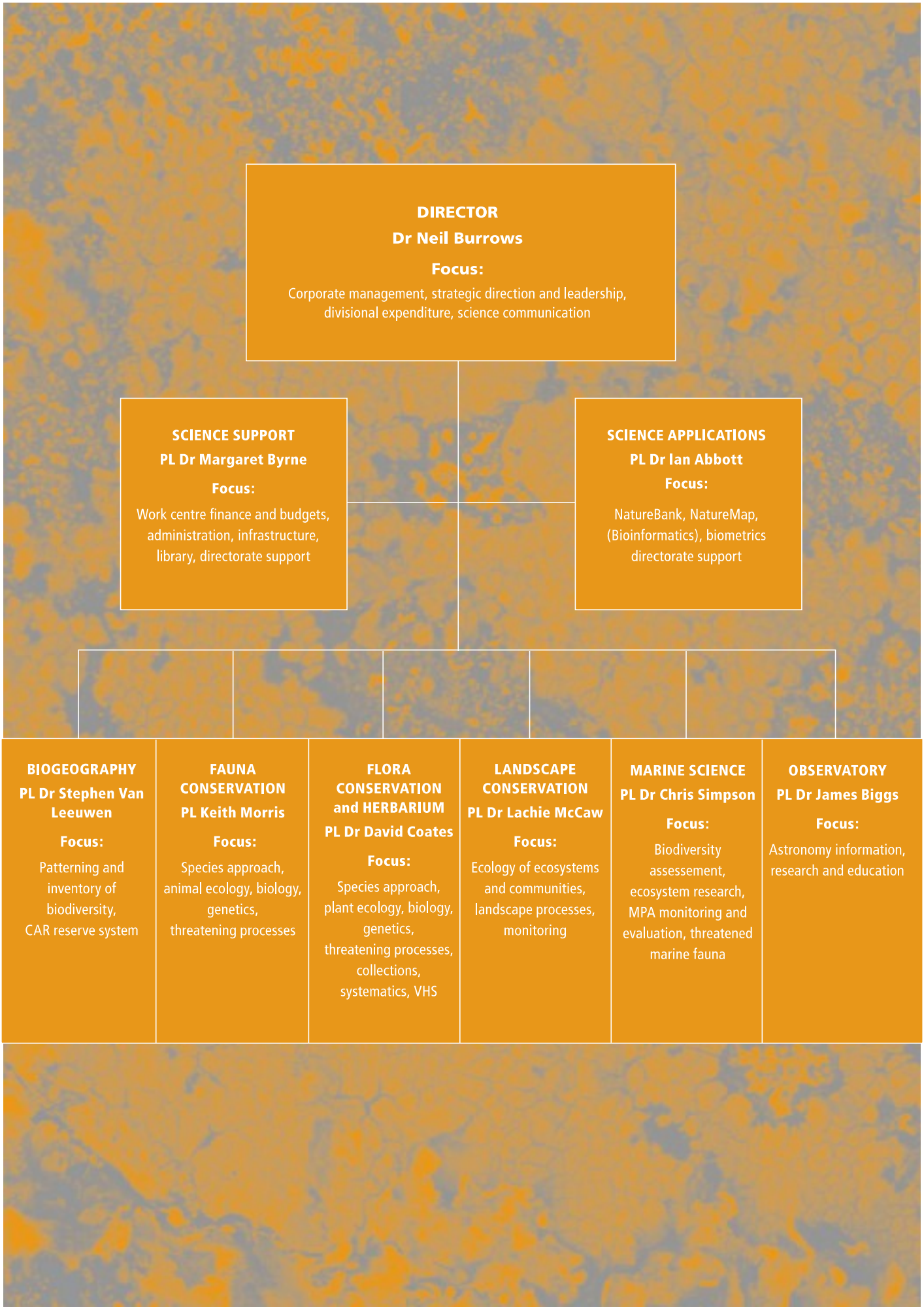
The Science Division is the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC's) prime source of new knowledge and information based on scientific research. The work of this division reflects a significant investment by DEC in multi-disciplinary biodiversity conservation research, monitoring and biogeography. In partnership with internal and external groups, the division strives to understand composition, patterns and processes of the Western Australian marine and terrestrial biota as a basis for its conservation and sustainable utilisation. Having a significant centralised and coordinated science capability is one of DEC's strengths, and recognises the vital role of science and information in underpinning its policies and practices to conserve and protect the State's biodiversity.

Strategic planning is an important process for ensuring that the Science Division efficiently and effectively delivers outcomes that are relevant to the present and also meet the future needs of DEC. This plan does not extend to science-based biodiversity conservation programs that may be initiated by other divisions within DEC, nor does it include astronomical research and other activities carried out by the Perth Observatory, a program within the Science Division. This plan summarises key strategic directions for the Science Division in biodiversity conservation research for the period 2008–2017. However, given the dynamic nature of the social, political and economic environment, the plan will need to be reviewed every two years.

The plan is consistent with the objectives and strategies elucidated in DEC's Corporate Plan 2007–2009 (DEC 2007), 'A 100-year Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Western Australia (Draft); Phase One: Blueprint to the Bicentenary in 2029' (DEC 2006), the 'Forest Management Plan 2004–2013' (Conservation Commission of Western Australia 2004), and with the rolling five-year Regional Nature Conservation Service Plans (DEC 2006). It reviews the division's strengths and weaknesses as well as threats to and opportunities for the division, and presents statements relating to the division's vision, mission, goals and strategies.

The plan has been developed to identify key future directions and priorities. In doing so, planning has not been entirely constrained by what may be possible to achieve with existing resources. The plan is aspirational and identifies areas of greatest strategic importance and highest priority. The appendices indicate what can be achieved with existing resources and what actions require new resources. It will be the responsibility of the Science Director, with support from the Science Management Team, to work towards developing and implementing strategies to resource the implementation of the plan, including human and financial resources. Detailed Science Project Plans (SPPs) will be developed for approved priority research areas.

Structure


DIRECTOR
Dr Neil Burrows
Focus:
Corporate management, strategic direction and leadership, divisional expenditure, science communication
SCIENCE SUPPORT
PL Dr Margaret Byrne
Focus:
Work centre finance and budgets, administration, infrastructure, library, directorate support
SCIENCE APPLICATIONS
PL Dr Ian Abbott
Focus:
NatureBank, NatureMap, (Bioinformatics), biometrics directorate support
BIOGEOGRAPHY
PL Dr Stephen Van Leeuwen
Focus:
Patterning and inventory of biodiversity, CAR reserve system
FAUNA CONSERVATION
PL Keith Morris
Focus:
Species approach, animal ecology, biology, genetics, threatening processes
FLORA CONSERVATION and HERBARIUM
PL Dr David Coates
Focus:
Species approach, plant ecology, biology, genetics, threatening processes, collections, systematics, VHS
LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION
PL Dr Lachie McCaw
Focus:
Ecology of ecosystems and communities, landscape processes, monitoring
MARINE SCIENCE
PL Dr Chris Simpson
Focus:
Biodiversity assessement, ecosystem research, MPA monitoring and evaluation, threatened marine fauna
OBSERVATORY
PL Dr James Biggs
Focus:
Astronomy information, research and education

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Department of Environment and Conservation
Science Division

A Strategic Plan for Biodiversity Conservation Research

2008 – 2017




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