

Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust Annual Report



2016-2017

A report of the outputs, expenditure
and governance of the Trust

August 2017

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Management Panel of the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust, I am pleased to present the fourth Annual Report on our activities. This report is a public documentation of the Trust's activities for the 2016-17 financial year, ensuring our accountability to the organisations that fund the Trust, to the key stakeholders in the Great Victoria Desert (GVD), and to the broader WA public.

A key focus of the Trust this year has been the continued development of a partnership arrangement with the key stakeholders in the GVD, especially the Traditional Owners, and the funding of three key strategic projects.

I would like to personally thank the members of the Management Panel for their continued commitment to the Trust's objectives and the Technical Advisory Panel for their high level and invaluable technical advice. A special thanks to Caroline Minton who is acting as the Trust's Operations Manager while Kathryn Sinclair takes maternity leave, and whose skills, hard work and professionalism have been critical to the continued success of the Trust's activities.

In the year ahead, the Trust wants to continue to fund important projects that add to the knowledge of the ecology and better management of the GVD, especially in cooperation with the Traditional Owners. As well, a priority will be to identify other organisations and industry groups who would like to be active members of the Trust.

Finally, I would like to formally acknowledge the strong and effective working relationship the Trust has with AngloGold Ashanti Australia, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and Rangelands NRM who are facilitating the Adaptive Management Partnership in the GVD for the Trust.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garry Middle".

Dr Garry Middle

Executive Summary

The Trust has maintained momentum throughout the 2016-17 financial year, with completion and commencement of several important background works essential for threatened species management and biodiversity conservation in the Great Victoria Desert (GVD).

Five projects were completed during the year - three initiated in 2015-16 and two initiated in 2016-17:

- Sandhill Dunnart Research and Adaptive Management Plan (December 2016);
- Draft Monitoring Protocols for Malleefowl in the GVD (April 2017);
- Adaptive Management Implementation Plan for the GVD (June 2017), including three workshops for the Adaptive Management Partnership (October, November, and March 2017);
- Templates to streamline the work of the Trust and improve branding (June 2017); and
- Stratified survey site selection for Malleefowl across the GVD (July 2017).

In addition, three additional contracts were scoped and initiated – for completion in 2017-18 - that will provide essential background information for the future planning and implementation of fire management:

- Burn Rules and biodiversity mapping in Spinifex People's country;
- Extension to Northern Australian and Rangelands Fire Information (NAFI) fire scar mapping; and
- Identification of traditional burn patterns and practices in the GVD.

The following works have recently commenced, with surveys planned for late 2017/early 2018:

- Scoping of camera trapping surveys for Sandhill Dunnart throughout the GVD; and
- Scoping of Malleefowl surveys to be undertaken throughout the GVD.

The Management Panel continues to provide oversight and direction on Trust matters, working with the Trust's Operations Manager throughout the year, including during two Management Panel meetings, several out-of-session decisions and ad hoc advice. The Management Panel, Operations Manager and Trustee's representative also undertook a site visit to the GVD in June 2017 to gain first-hand insight into key assets and management challenges and develop a connection with country. This knowledge will be used for the re-prioritisation of projects and expenditure for 2018 and beyond, for articulation in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Conservation Plan, being developed in 2017-18.

During the year, Ian Kealley, an original Management Panel member from the former Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) retired and was replaced by his successor Nigel Wessels. The Trust's Operations Manager took maternity leave at the end of January and was replaced, on a short-term contract, through a competitive process. The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) for the Trust maintained its original membership and continued to provide technical advice on various projects and plans, through participation in five TAP meetings and various workshops and discussions.

Whilst the Trust has successfully acquired several partners for collaborative conservation and management works in the GVD through the formation and funding of the Adaptive Management Partnership, the sourcing of additional financial partners has proven to be challenging. Additional effort will be extended in 2017-18 to broaden the Trust's funding base. In the meantime, the Trust has received its first donation and has facilitated further donations through the development and uploading of donation forms to its website as well as a website overhaul to improve knowledge-sharing and branding.

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1. Introduction

The Trust represents a unique model for a biodiversity offset in Western Australia, and Australia in general. It was established by the Tropicana Joint Venture (AngloGold Ashanti Australia (AGAA) Ltd (manager and 70% owner) and Independence Group NL (30% owner)) as the central part of an offset package for the Tropicana Gold Mine (TGM) in Western Australia under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999.

2016-17 was the fourth year of operation for the Trust and marked the commissioning of several important foundational projects. These included three projects related to fire management – one of the biggest challenges for threatened species conservation in the Great Victoria Desert (GVD) – in addition to the planning and scoping of surveys for both Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnarts. The Trust also funded the development of an Adaptive Management Implementation Plan for the region through the Adaptive Management Partnership, which was completed in June 2017. The Plan will provide guidance for collaborative works for biodiversity conservation amongst eight key stakeholders, including Traditional Owners. These projects, and their anticipated outcomes, align closely with the overall objectives of the Trust.

The Trust's main aim is to deliver conservation benefits to nationally-listed threatened species, at a landscape-scale, and facilitate indigenous involvement in land management and conservation activities in the region. The Trust's purposes, region of focus ('Trust Area') and governance structure are outlined in more detail below.

1.1 Trust Purposes

The purpose of the Trust is to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop a Bioregional Management Plan (also referred to as a 'Biodiversity Conservation Plan') for the Western Great Victoria Desert bioregions 1 and 2 (i.e. the 'Trust Area');
2. Facilitate and/or undertake priority research in the Bioregional Management Plan at the landscape level and into species considered to be of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*, including the Sandhill Dunnart and Malleefowl;
3. Fund on-ground environmental and conservation management at the landscape level, with emphasis on net conservation benefits to threatened species, including those considered MNES;
4. Facilitate indigenous involvement in land management and conservation activities in support of the above objectives.

These objectives reflect those specified in Condition 6 of the *EPBC Act* approval 2008/4270 for the Tropicana Gold Mine. They have been integrated into the Project Plan submitted to the former Department of the Environment (DoE) in 2011 and Schedule 1 of the Trust Deed executed in 2013. The Project Plan was updated and approved in August 2015 to reflect the revised direction of the Trust since it commenced activities in late 2013.

1.2 Trust Area

The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) classifies Australia's landscapes into 89 large geographically distinct bioregions. These are based on common climate, geology, landform, native

vegetation and species information (DoE, 2015). The 89 bioregions are further refined to form 419 subregions. These are more localised and homogenous geomorphological units in each bioregion.

The GVD is one of the 89 IBRA bioregions. It is comprised of 6 subregions which extend from approximately 200km east of Kalgoorlie in Western Australia to cover large areas of South Australia. The entire GVD IBRA region covers 42,375,084 ha. The Trust's area of focus ('Trust Area') is comprised of the two most western subregions of the GVD, known as Shield and Central, which are entirely located within Western Australia (refer to Figure 1). These two sub-regions cover an area of 17,332,721 ha.

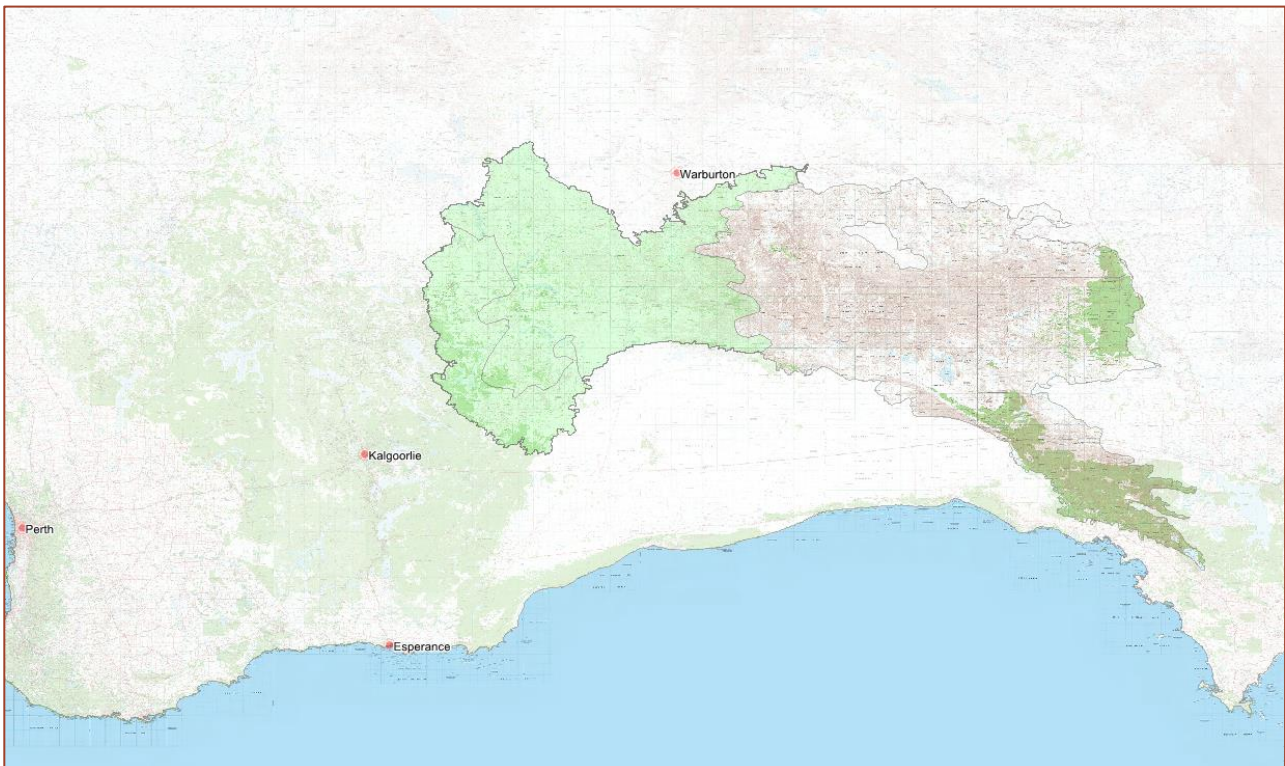


Figure 1. The location and extent of the GVD (outlined) and the Trust Area (bright green)

Whilst the Trust's activities are predominantly focussed on research and on-ground activities within the Shield and Central subregions of the GVD, they can occur outside this region if they meet the Trust's overall objectives. That is, they must be relevant and beneficial to species and biodiversity within the Trust Area, especially species and communities that are MNES protected by the *EPBC Act*.

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 former DoE as part of the TGM *EPBC Act* approval (2008/4270). The governance structure of the Trust is outlined in Figure 2.

The activities and expenditure of the Trust are the overall responsibility of the Trust's Management Panel, which consists of representatives from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (formerly the Department of Parks and Wildlife until 1 July 2017) and AngloGold Ashanti Australia, as well as an independent Chair.

The day-to-day management and operation of the Trust is the responsibility of the Operations Manager (previously the ‘Trust Coordinator’). The Operations Manager reports to the Trust’s Management Panel via the Chair. The Operations Manager is supported through the provision of technical advice from the Trust’s Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). The TAP consists of five members – four independent experts and a technical expert from the Management Panel.

The Public Trustee of Western Australia maintains 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 Trust’s funds, held by the Public Trustee, are allocated to various organisations and individuals according to anticipated benefit, value for money, and alignment with the Trust’s objectives and priorities. The recipients include Traditional Owner groups, researchers, not-for-profit environmental groups and expert consultants.

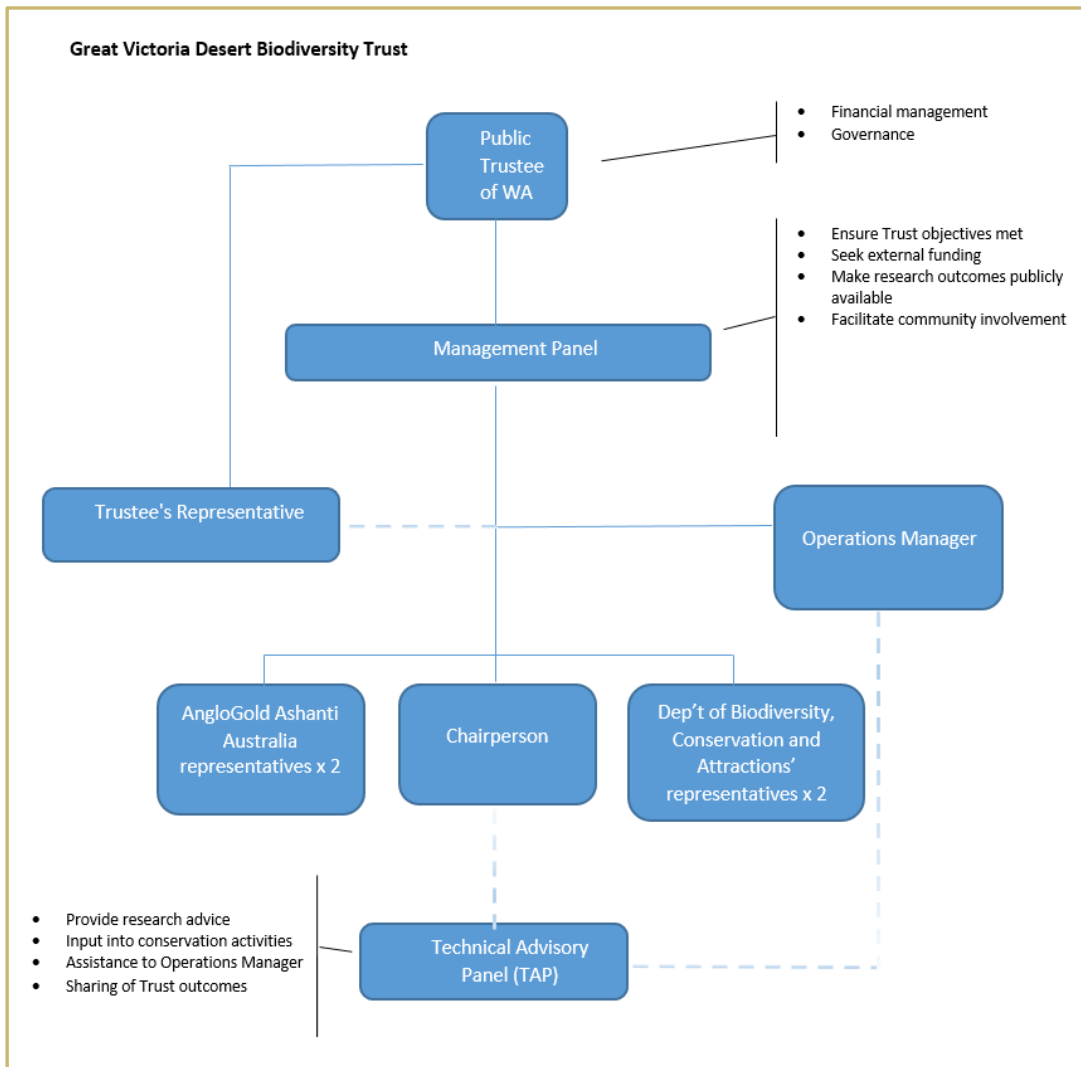


Figure 2. The Structure of the Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust

The Trust, and all of its activities and expenditure, is governed by an overarching Trust Deed. This document details the relationship between:

- The Trust’s Management Panel;
- AngloGold Ashanti Australia, as the founder; and
- The Public Trustee of Western Australia, as the financial manager.

The Trust Deed also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Management Panel, Chair, Trustee, Operations Manager and the TAP, and the purposes and scope of the Trust.

The following sections of this report describe the Trust’s governance in more detail, as well as specifics regarding governance of the Trust in the 2016-17 financial year. Additional background information is located at www.gvdbiodiversitytrust.org.au/about-us and in the Trust Deed (<http://www.gvdbiodiversitytrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/GVDBT-Trust-Deed.pdf>).

2.1 The Management Panel

In November 2016, Ian Kealley, an original member of the Management Panel, retired from the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) and relinquished his position on the Trust’s Management Panel in the process. The Management Panel welcomed his replacement, Nigel Wessels, who also succeeded Ian at DPaW (now the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, DBCA).

The Management Panel met twice during the 2016-17 financial year, as outlined in Table 1, to ensure progress was maintained on key priorities. The Management Panel also made several out-of-session consensus-based decisions regarding projects, variations and one-off administrative expenditure.

Table 1: Management Panel Meetings and Attendance 2016-2017

Attendee	Meeting 1: 21/11/2016 Attendance	Meeting 2: 06/06/2017 Attendance
Kris Anderson (Public Trustee)	✓	✓
Norm Galli (AGAA)	✓	✓
Garry Middle (Chair)	✓	✓
Nerilee Rockman (AGAA)	✓	✓*
Stephen van Leeuwen (DBCA)	✓	✓
Nigel Wessels (DBCA)	✓*	✓
Kathryn Sinclair/Caroline Minton (Trust Operations Manager)	✓	✓

Key: * = Skype/teleconference

The Trust’s management team (Management Panel, Trust Operations Manager and Public Trustee’s representative) completed a three-day site visit to the GVD in early June 2017 to see first-hand the various vegetation communities, habitats for endangered Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnart, and the threats facing the GVD’s biodiversity. Observations during this trip included an abandoned Malleefowl mound, extensive areas of burnt vegetation and numerous footprints of introduced predators and herbivores (cat, fox, wild dog, camel and rabbit).



Figure 3. Left to right: Management Panel members Norm Galli, Nigel Wessels, Garry Middle (Chair) and Stephen van Leeuwen, and Operations Manager Caroline Minton, at Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve in the GVD.

The Trust's management team has acquired a greater understanding of the GVD's assets and threats, which is essential for effectively planning and implementing sound conservation and management strategies. This enhanced knowledge will be put to good use in completing the Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the region which will outline the future priorities for management actions and Trust expenditure to protect key assets and address significant threats.

The direct costs to the Trust for the site visit were negligible, due to the generous provision by Tropicana Gold Mine (TGM) of accommodation and catering as well as flights to and from the mine site. The vehicles for the site visit were generously provided by the DBCA.

2.2 The Operations Manager

The Trust's long-term Operations Manager (previously the Trust's Coordinator), Kathryn Sinclair, commenced eight months of maternity leave in February 2017. Caroline Minton was engaged through a competitive process to undertake the role in Ms Sinclair's absence. Ms Minton commenced on 30th January 2017, allowing for a one-week handover.

The Chair of the Trust had regular meetings (1-2 times per fortnight) with the Trust's Operations Manager throughout the year to ensure the Trust maintained steady progress on key activities and maintained a strategic vision of the objectives of the Trust.

2.3 The Public Trustee

The Public Trustee's representative attended all meetings of the Management Panel in 2016-17, as shown in Table 1, as well as providing assistance with donations to the Trust and project invoice payments. The Trustee has provided quarterly and annual financial statements (refer to section 4.1.3), which are tabled at Management Panel meetings.

As in previous years, the Public Trustee's representative worked closely with Ernst and Young, the nominated financial auditors, to ensure that all of the Trust's spending, accounting and financial reporting had been conducted appropriately. The Trustee continues to give strong guidance to the Trust to ensure it meets both financial and legal obligations.

2.4 The Technical Advisory Panel

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) was established In April 2015 to provide expert advice and support to the Trust, such as providing feedback on the scope of research proposals, on-ground environmental or conservation activities and draft research reports. The membership of the TAP has remained unchanged since establishment, retaining its five original biodiversity experts.

The TAP met five times during the 2016-17 financial year, as outlined in Table 2, to discuss issues including: the scoping of Sandhill Dunnart surveys; and a potential application for a Threatened Species Recovery grant. Three of the TAP members also provided significant input into discussions and workshops related to the Malleefowl Survey Site Selection project (refer to section 3.1.1), and two were key members of the Adaptive Management Implementation Plan development workshops (refer to section 3.1.7).

Table 2: Technical Advisory Panel Meetings and Attendance 2016-17

Attendee	Meeting 1: 12/08/2016 Attendance	Meeting 2: 14/11/2016 Attendance	Meeting 3: 24/04/2017 Attendance	Meeting 2: 14/11/2016 Attendance	Meeting 2: 14/11/2016 Attendance
Belinda Bastow	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Ryan Ellis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Katherine Moseby	✓*	✓*	✗	✗	✓*
Blair Parsons	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Stephen van Leeuwen	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kathryn Sinclair / Caroline Minton (Trust Operations Manager)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key:* = Skype/teleconference

3. Trust Activities

3.1 Funded Projects

Several new projects were scoped, and contracts developed, in early 2017, for completion of key foundational work for the trust. An overview of the works initiated and/or undertaken during the 2016-17 financial year is provided below.

3.1.1 Malleefowl Survey Site Selection

Very little is still known about Malleefowl abundance and distribution throughout the GVD. Most of the records in the GVD are primarily in the southwest corner as a result of survey programs associated with resources development proposals. Elsewhere records are sparse and isolated. Additional surveys are required to identify Malleefowl distribution and habitat preference in the GVD.

Gaia Resources was contracted by the Trust in May 2017 to identify suitable additional sites to survey for Malleefowl across a range of categories of likely Malleefowl habitat suitability. Various mapping layers were analysed, including Beard's vegetation associations, fire scars, Landsat imagery, roads and tracks. A suitability map book containing areas of high, moderate and low suitability for Malleefowl was created, following workshops with experts and key stakeholders.

A smaller set of potential survey locations that are accessible from existing roads and tracks, and geographically distributed across the GVD, were subsequently nominated from the thousands of candidate polygon areas. Seventy-six survey sites were randomly selected from this subset, across the three categories of suitability. A final map book of sites to survey has been created to provide to the survey team(s). The survey sites also include twenty-four of the accessible sites where Malleefowl have previously been recorded. The contract was completed in mid-July 2017. Surveys are planned for late 2017.

3.1.2 Malleefowl Monitoring Protocols

In 2016 the Trust contracted Joe Benshemesh from the National Malleefowl Recovery Team to develop protocols for monitoring Malleefowl in the GVD. Protocols specifically designed for the GVD were deemed appropriate due to the extremely low density of Malleefowl believed to be present throughout these arid lands compared to other areas of the species' distribution.

The draft document was completed in April 2017 and is currently under review by the TAP following feedback and input from reviewers at DBCA. The protocols will be utilised by the Trust for ongoing monitoring of key Malleefowl populations once surveys have identified their location and distribution.

3.1.3 Burn Rule and Biodiversity Mapping in Spinifex Lands

Previous attempts by DBCA and Spinifex Land Management (SLM) in 2016 to implement fire management through targeted burning were restricted due to uncertainty regarding the cultural authority to burn. In April 2017 SLM were engaged by the Trust to determine Burn Rules for Spinifex People's country. SLM combined the project funding from the Trust with funding from the Maralinga Piling Trust and the National Landcare Program to facilitate a 'Back to Country' week for the Spinifex people.

Around 80 members and staff from the Tjuntjunjarra Community made the trip to Ilkurlka in May 2017 for the event. The week's activities included flying Tjilpi and Minyma (Elders), Rangers and key family members via helicopter to significant ecological and cultural sites, using funding from the Trust. Burn Rules were established to protect these sites from fire. The Rangers also collected ecological data to assist the Trust and SLM, such as vegetation type and the presence of Malleefowl (including previously unknown locations), weeds, introduced predators and feral herbivores.



Figure 4. Left to right: SLM Head Ranger Ethan Hansen, Tjilpi Mr Fred Grant and Mr Roy Underwood, prior to heading off to their country

The school children from the Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School interviewed the Elders and Rangers to document their experiences on video, and stories were also captured through paintings. Interviews with the Elders were used as a means to document traditional land management practices, such as patch burning, prior to European influence in Spinifex People's country. Together with the Burn Rules this information will be used by the GVDBT and SLM to inform future fire management planning, through re-introduction of traditional patch-burn practices to protect vegetation and threatened fauna in the GVD from large unmanaged wildfires.

3.1.4 Identification of Traditional Burn Patterns and Practices

The DBCA were engaged by the Trust in April 2017 to reconstruct traditional Aboriginal burning patterns in the GVD. It was initially hoped that aerial photography from the military's Blue Streak Rocket Project (BSR) in 1953 could be used, however only a small section of the rocket's flight path was photographed, in a remote area in the Gibson Desert. Instead, the earliest aerial photography available has been sourced from 1960/61, covering the areas of Spinifex country where Aboriginal people were believed to be still living a traditional or a transient traditional lifestyle.

Aerial photographs, representing the most likely areas where traditional burning was still being practiced in 1960/61 within the 'flammable' spinifex-dominated landscapes of the northern portion of the Spinifex lands have been chosen for study. DBCA are currently electronically 'stitching' together various digital photographs from Landgate to form a scale-rectified mosaic. Once completed, identification and digitising of fire scars will commence. Contemporary fire scar patterns, reconstructed using Landsat satellite imagery, will be compared and contrasted with the 'traditional' burning patterns evident on the early aerial photography.

There is very little detailed information in the literature documenting traditional burning practices, although it seems that Spinifex people did not use fire as ubiquitously as people in the northern deserts. Further interviews with Spinifex Elders, in addition to those conducted as part of the Burn Rule and Biodiversity Mapping project by SLM, are proposed to gain greater clarity to complement the analysis of aerial photography, so that traditional fire management can be re-implemented in the GVD to protect threatened species and reduce the habitat damage caused by wildfires. The project will be completed by the end of 2017.

3.1.5 Extension to NAFI Fire Scar Mapping

The Trust has contracted the North Australia and Rangelands Fire Information (NAFI) service to complete long-term fire history mapping for the GVD and the broader Western Australian rangelands. This work involves the capture of monthly burn scars from Landsat imagery at a resolution of 1:250m for each year between 2000-2002. This burn scar data is then used to produce fire history layers that show fire size, burn frequency and time since last burnt. The Trust has contracted NAFI to deliver this product by October 2017. Fire mapping for the years 2003–2016 has previously been completed under separate contracts coordinated by Rangelands NRM (RNRM) and part-funded by the Trust.

The mapping will be displayed on the NAFI website (www.firenorth.org.au), administered by Charles Darwin University, which also provides an online reporting tool that can convert the fire scar data into graphs and tables. This tool will include relevant GVD areas, available for reporting in drop-down menus. Fire scar history identifies frequency of burns, as well as insight into vegetation types and fuel loads. This information will be used to improve the planning and implementation of fire management in the GVD, to protect threatened species.

3.1.6 Template Development

The Trust is registered as a charitable organisation and can accept donations from individuals, groups and organisations to contribute towards essential research and on-ground land management for threatened species in the GVD. Other than the initial and annual contribution from the Tropicana Joint Venture, the Trust had not previously received contributions from any other party.

The Trust received its first donation in April 2017. The APA Group donated \$500 to the Trust, on behalf of their Eastern Goldfields Pipeline (EGP) project team, as part of their staff awards program. A donation form and receipt template have subsequently been created to formalise and streamline the donation process. The donation form is now readily downloadable from the Trust's website.

The donation form and receipt were part of a suite of templates developed by Whistling Moose Graphics for the Trust in mid-2017. These also included a letterhead, report (used here), newsletter and PowerPoint templates. The templates will help to streamline the Trust's operations, as well as strengthen the Trust's brand and image, with the aim of attracting additional funding partners.

3.1.7 Adaptive Management Implementation Plan

The Trust has funded RNRM to develop an Adaptive Management Implementation Plan (AMIP) for the Trust Area. The AMIP was developed over the course of three workshops held between October 2016 and March 2017. These were facilitated by Conservation Management (CM) using an adaptive management framework. Representatives from all eight stakeholder groups from the Adaptive Management Partnership (AMP, refer to section 3.2.1) worked closely together to develop the plan.

The plan outlines what the group identified as the GVD's key natural and cultural assets and the AMP's priority actions for land management and research at the species and landscape level. These are set out under a framework of seven high-level project themes related to conserving biodiversity and culture:

1. Buffel grass management;
2. Introduced predators and at-risk fauna;
3. Waru (Fire);
4. Camel / feral herbivore management;
5. Traditional ecological knowledge;
6. Access to country; and
7. Support the capacity of traditional owner groups.

The AMIP will be used as a guiding document to facilitate the coordination of activities and leveraging of resources between AMP organisations. The AMIP is available for download from the Trust's website at <http://gvd biodiversity trust.org.au/what-we-do/adaptive-management-partnership/>.

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

3.2.1 Adaptive Management Partnership

In 2014 a conversation commenced that sought to bring together key stakeholders in the GVD to work collaboratively on conservation and land management. The AMP was subsequently formed to bring together eight stakeholder groups with an interest in looking after desert Country in the GVD: the Trust, SLM, Yilka Aboriginal Corporation (YAC), Central Desert Native Title Services (CDNTS), the DBCA, RNRM, Greening

Australia (GA) and CM. By bringing people together, the aim is to enhance collective knowledge and understanding of the biodiversity of the GVD and leverage individual resources to improve conservation efforts across this vast region.

RNRM were engaged by the Trust under contract to develop a regional plan for the group through stakeholder workshops and an adaptive management framework. Three workshops were held between October 2016 and March 2017, and the AMIP subsequently delivered in June 2017 (refer to section 3.1.7, above). The AMP will now seek to implement the plan, based on resource and funding availability, working collaboratively wherever possible. RNRM will continue to provide support to the AMP.



Figure 5. AMIP workshop 3 participants, March 2017. Left to right standing: Dave Whitelaw (CM), Tom Griffiths (CDLC), Nigel Wessels (DBCA), Gary Middle (Trust), Chris Curnow (RNRM), Blair Parsons (GA), Rob Thomas (CDLC), Mladen Mrvelj (YAC). Left to right seated: Gaye Mackenzie (RNRM), Caroline Minton (Trust), Shane Doudle (SLM), Sam Doudle (SLM), Harvey Murray (YAC); photo by Stuart Cowell (CM, facilitator).

3.2.2 Trust Promotion

The Trust's Operations Manager gave a presentation to the Chamber of Minerals and Energy's (CME's) Environmental Committee in Kalgoorlie in March 2017. The focus of the presentation was to provide insight to the drivers for the establishment of the Trust and its benefits, with background information about the Trust's activities and outcomes to date.

The presentation provided a great marketing opportunity to promote the Trust to resources companies in the region, for their consideration of a biodiversity offset as an alternative approach to traditional offset arrangements, if appropriate, and to consider partnering with the Trust to deliver greater biodiversity outcomes in the region. Follow-up meetings are planned with key prospective partners in late 2017/early 2018.

The Trust was also invited to speak to attendees at an Environmental Practitioner's Association Workshop sundowner in May 2017, courtesy of one of the Trust's TAP members who sits on their organising committee. The Trust's Chair addressed the group, giving them a high-level overview of the Trust and raising awareness of its work.

3.2.3 Supporting Relevant Organisations

The Trust's Operations Manager continues to attend meetings of the Ten Deserts Alliance and the meetings of their Buffel-Free GVD sub-group, providing input and support wherever possible. This has recently included review of, and input into, a comprehensive grant application for a Ten Deserts Project bid for substantial funding from BHP Billiton Foundation, including Buffel Grass management in the GVD by SLM. The project is a collaboration between the Ten Deserts Alliance, the Indigenous Desert Alliance, Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa and several other desert stakeholders.

The Trust also continues to be involved with the National Malleefowl Recovery Team, mainly through the two-way sharing of information and provision of activity updates. The Operations Manager, and another representative from the AMP (RNRM), attended the National Malleefowl Adaptive Management Project workshop held in Perth in May 2017, providing input and insight into the potential for a paired GVD Malleefowl monitoring and predator control site to be included in the national study. Currently insufficient data are available for sites to be identified in the GVD. However, it is hoped that the results of the Malleefowl surveys, planned for the GVD in late 2017/early 2018, will enable identification of suitable locations for paired sites in the GVD to be included in the National study.

4. Finances, Administration and Allocation of Funds

4.1 Finances

The annual contribution from the Tropicana Joint Venture (TJV) to the Trust in 2016-17 was \$333,684, based on an annual fee of \$100,000 plus \$80 per hectare of cleared footprint for the TGM. The Trust also received \$39,716 interest from the funds held on its behalf by the Public Trustee. In addition, a donation of \$500 was received by the Trust in 2017 from APA Group, the first financial contribution received by the Trust other than that from the TJV.

A total of \$120,289 was spent on several projects in the 2016-17 financial year, including \$80,300 for the AMP workshops and development of the AMIP (refer to section 3.1). A summary of the Trust's income and expenditure during the 2016-17 financial year is outlined in Table 3 and in the annual financial statement ('Statement of Transactions') provided by the Public Trustee (Appendix 1).

AGAA maintains an oversight of the Trust's day-to-day expenditure as part of its administrative support function, and all Trust expenditure is presented to the Management Panel in quarterly and annual statements provided by the Public Trustee.

The Trustee has continued to provide strong support and guidance in 2016-17 to the Trust to ensure it meets its financial and legal obligations. Financial statements are provided to the Trust by the Public Trustee on a quarterly and annual basis, which are subsequently tabled at Management Panel meetings.

Ernst and Young audited the Trust in December 2016 and confirmed that the Trust's spending, accounting and financial reporting have been conducted appropriately.

Table 3: Summary of income and expenditure for the Trust during the 2016-17 financial year

Item	Income	Expenditure
Income		
Annual contribution (AGAA)	\$333,684	
Donation (APA Group)	\$500	
Interest	\$39,716	
Expenditure: management and administration		
Salary (Operations Manager - project management and administration*) and general expenses		\$132,578
Financial management fees (Public Trustee)		\$13,988
Financial audit fees (Ernst and Young)		\$5,665
Scientific editing - Biodiversity Conservation Plan (N. Guthrie)		\$275
Job advertisements		\$390
Out of pocket expenses (Chair)		\$4,961
Expenditure: Projects		
Malleefowl survey site selection project (Gaia Resources) <small>refer to section 3.1.1</small>		\$10,364
Burn Rule and Biodiversity Mapping project (SLM) <small>refer to section 3.1.3</small>		\$20,000
Identification of Traditional Burn Patterns and Practices ('Blue Streak rocket') project – DBCA <small>refer to section 3.1.4</small>		\$4,125
Extension to NAFI Fire Scar Mapping project - Charles Darwin University <small>refer to section 3.1.5</small>		\$5,500
Template development - Whistling Moose Graphics <small>refer to section 3.1.6</small>		\$2,387
Development of AMIP – RNRM <small>refer to section 3.1.7</small>		\$80,300
Refund		
Refund of GST on expenditure		(\$14,844)
TOTAL	\$373,900	\$265,690

Key: * = approximately 80% of time spent on project and contract management and 20% on Trust operations and administration.

4.2 Administration

AGAA continues to provide essential administrative support to the Operations Manager and Trust, including:

- Human resource services, such as payroll management, employment contract;
- General office administration and equipment, such as IT, mobile phone, office/meeting space;
- Flights, accommodation and access to vehicles at TGM, as appropriate; and
- Legal services for contracts.

This substantial in-kind support represents a considerable reduction in the administration expenses that would otherwise be incurred by the Trust and ensures that the Trust maintains its administration cost below the 20% maximum outlined in the Trust Deed.

4.3 Funding

The Trust has made significant inroads into leveraging the knowledge, strengths and resources of several key stakeholders in the region through the development of the AMP. However, other than a \$500 donation to the Trust from the APA Group in April 2017, the TGM continues to be the Trust's sole financial contributor. Little interest has been demonstrated to date from other companies in the resources sector operating in or near to the Trust Area.

The Trust's Operations Manager gave a presentation to the CME Environment Committee on the Trust, its activities and potential partnership opportunities in March 2017, and has since sought to strengthen the Trust's brand, reputation and funding potential through developing donation forms and other professional templates and enhancing the Trust's public face, i.e. its website.

5. Future Direction

5.1 Management Plans

5.1.1 Review of Research and Adaptive Management Plans

In 2015-2016 the Trust developed Research and Adaptive Management Plans (RAMPs) for Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnart, following workshops in 2014 with relevant experts and key stakeholders. The RAMPs have been used to prioritise initial work for the Trust related to these species, including:

- Collating Malleefowl records in the GVD report (by DPaW in February 2016);
- Development of survey and monitoring guidelines and a baseline survey design for Sandhill Dunnart (by DPaW in April and May 2016 respectively);
- Development of Malleefowl monitoring protocols for use in the GVD (by J. Benshemesh in April 2017, refer to section 3.1.2); and
- Identification of Malleefowl survey site locations (by Gaia Resources in July 2017, refer to section 3.1.1).

The TAP will be assisting the Trust in the review and update of the RAMPs following the surveys for each species in late 2017/early 2018, including a review of priority research and projects for each species.

5.1.2 Completion of Biodiversity Conservation Plan

The background information collected through the workshops and development of various documents was added to various other sources of information in the collation of part one of The Biodiversity Conservation Plan (BCP) for the region. The BCP, also referred to as the 'Bioregional Management Plan', is one of the key deliverables for the Trust and is a requirement under Condition six of the *EPBC Act (2008/4270)* approvals for the TGM project. This document contains a comprehensive summary of the existing environment of the region and provides an important background document to underpin future work for the Trust. The BCP was submitted to the Department of Environment and Energy (formerly the DoE) in August 2016.

In 2017-2018 the Trust will develop part two of the BCP, which will provide an overview of planned research and on-ground activities, and expenditure, for the next five years. It will be based on: priorities for Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnart identified in the revised RAMPs; key projects identified by the AMP and outlined in the AMIP (refer to sections 3.1.7 and 3.2.1); the inputs and outputs of collective works to date;

and the input of experts including TAP and Management Panel members. The Trust also intends to develop a Strategic Plan to refocus and clarify its high-level governance and strategy for the future.

5.2 Surveys for Threatened Species

Scoping is currently being undertaken for Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnart surveys to be conducted throughout the GVD, based on the survey designs and guidelines developed to date (refer to section 5.2.1). The surveys are planned for completion in late 2017/early 2018. The results will be used to further refine the RAMPs and inform research and on-ground management activities required for these species.

5.3 Stakeholder Engagement

5.3.1 Adaptive Management Partnership

The Trust will continue to encourage stakeholder collaboration and collective effort for biodiversity conservation within the Trust Area, predominantly through engaging with the AMP and supporting the implementation of the AMIP. The Trust would also like to work with the AMP to encourage and support: Yilka Aboriginal Corporation to develop a Ranger program; and potential future involvement of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Traditional Owner group in the AMP and AMIP implementation throughout their lands in the north-east of the GVD.

5.3.2 Additional Funding Partners

Due to the sheer size of the Trust Area, and the range of biodiversity conservation and management issues to be addressed, the Trust has always acknowledged the need to find additional funding partners to the TJV.

The Trust has recently sought to improve its online presence, brand and desirability as an attractive funding partner/recipient through the development of various templates (e.g. letterhead, newsletter, donation form and PowerPoint presentation), as well as updating and enhancing the Trust's website, including the uploading of key documents and research related to the Trust and the region.

Key potential partners in the resources sector will be contacted again in late 2017/early 2018 in the hope of attracting additional funding partners, donors or in-kind support for the Trust's work.

6. Appendix: Statement of Transactions

Statement of Transactions



MR . GREAT VICTORIA DESERT BIODIVERSITY TRUST FUND

PREVIEW

Client Reference: 33111845 Contact: TM43

Statement of Transactions Number 7

Public Trustee Activity TRST / 1

Statement Period from 30/06/16 to 30/06/17

Date	Transaction Details	Payments	Receipts
	Opening Balance as per Statement of Account Dated 30/06/2016		1860397.95
OTHER PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS			
06-JUL-16	TRUST EXPENSES JUNE - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	10545.25	
31-JUL-16	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	846.93	
05-AUG-16	GST REVIEW FEE	277.00	
12-AUG-16	CHAIR OUT OF POCKET EXP. - VISION ENVIRONMENT - DR GARRY MIDDLE	2313.70	
27-AUG-16	GST REFUND		14844.00
01-SEP-16	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	874.25	
01-SEP-16	GVD MAPPING - GAIA RESOURCES	1559.25	
01-SEP-16	TRUST EXPENSES JULY - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	10859.01	
01-SEP-16	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	95.62	
15-SEP-16	BIODIVERSITY PLAN PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	8924.30	
30-SEP-16	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	113.83	
30-SEP-16	CR INTEREST 30/09/2016		21665.82
30-SEP-16	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	792.29	
18-OCT-16	AMIP PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	4675.00	
18-OCT-16	AMIP WORKSHOP - RANGELANDS NRM WA	18934.00	
31-OCT-16	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	846.93	
31-OCT-16	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	70.58	
30-NOV-16	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	819.61	
30-NOV-16	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	68.30	
07-DEC-16	CHAIR OUT OF POCKET EXP. - VISION ENVIRONMENT - DR GARRY MIDDLE	1396.57	
23-DEC-16	JOB ADVERTISEMENT - ETHICALJOBS.COM.AU	143.00	
23-DEC-16	JOB ADVERTISEMENT - NRMJOBS.COM.AU	247.50	
31-DEC-16	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	846.93	
31-DEC-16	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	349.86	
23-JAN-17	TRUST EXPENSES SEPTEMBER - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	9386.47	
23-JAN-17	TRUST EXPENSES OCTOBER - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	7925.97	
23-JAN-17	TRUST EXPENSES NOVEMBER - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	9916.68	
23-JAN-17	TRUST EXPENSES AUGUST - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	8139.85	
23-JAN-17	TRUST EXPENSES DECEMBER - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	12372.49	
01-FEB-17	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	449.27	
01-FEB-17	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	874.25	
03-FEB-17	AUDIT FEES 2016 - ERNST & YOUNG	5665.00	
28-FEB-17	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	143.43	
28-FEB-17	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	737.65	

MR . GREAT VICTORIA DESERT BIODIVERSITY TRUST FUND

PREVIEW

Client Reference: 33111845 Contact: TM43

Statement of Transactions Number 7

Public Trustee Activity TRST / 1

Statement Period from 30/06/16 to 30/06/17

Date	Transaction Details	Payments	Receipts
13-MAR-17	AMIP WORKSHOP 2 - RANGELANDS NRM WA	15993.64	
13-MAR-17	AMIP PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	3400.00	
13-MAR-17	AMIP PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	4250.00	
14-MAR-17	TRUST EXPENSES FEBRUARY - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	11948.78	
14-MAR-17	TRUST EXPENSES JANUARY - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	9809.28	
31-MAR-17	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	476.97	
31-MAR-17	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	846.93	
31-MAR-17	CR INTEREST 31/03/2017		18050.44
31-MAR-17	CHAIR OUT OF POCKET EXP. - VISION ENVIRONMENT - DR GARRY MIDDLE	1250.70	
07-APR-17	TRUST EXPENSES MARCH - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	12894.21	
13-APR-17	DONATION		500.00
26-APR-17	NAFI EXTENSION - CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY	5500.00	
26-APR-17	SCIENTIFIC EDITING - GUTHRIE, NADINE	275.00	
30-APR-17	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	193.56	
30-APR-17	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	819.61	
02-MAY-17	BURN/BIODIVERSITY MAPPING - PILA NGURU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION	10000.00	
03-MAY-17	TRUST EXPENSES APRIL - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	15109.94	
31-MAY-17	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	200.01	
31-MAY-17	TRUST EXPENSES MAY - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	13670.53	
31-MAY-17	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	846.93	
01-JUN-17	BLUE STREAK ROCKET PROJ. - DEPT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS	4125.00	
01-JUN-17	GRAPHIC DESIGN - WHISTLING MOOSE GRAPHICS	1331.00	
02-JUN-17	ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION		333684.00
16-JUN-17	GRAPHIC DESIGN - WHISTLING MOOSE GRAPHICS	1056.00	
22-JUN-17	AMIP WORKSHOP 2 - RANGELANDS NRM WA	1599.36	
22-JUN-17	AMIP PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	425.00	
22-JUN-17	AMIP PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	340.00	
26-JUN-17	AMIP WORKSHOP - RANGELANDS NRM WA	18019.10	
30-JUN-17	AMIP PROJECT - RANGELANDS NRM WA	3740.00	
30-JUN-17	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	819.61	
30-JUN-17	BURN/BIODIVERSITY MAPPING - PILA NGURU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION	10000.00	
30-JUN-17	MALLEEFOWL SITE SELECTION - GAIA RESOURCES	8804.40	
30-JUN-17	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	1162.57	
13-JUL-16	ATTENDANCE FEE	415.50	
	Closing Balance		1968607.81
	Opening Balance	Total Payments	Total Receipts
	1860397.95	280534.40	388744.26
			Closing Balance
			1968607.81

Statement of Assets & Liabilities



MR . GREAT VICTORIA DESERT BIODIVERSITY TRUST FUND

PREVIEW

Client Reference: 33111845 Contact: TM43

Statement of Assets & Liabilities Number 7

Public Trustee Activity TRST / 1

Statement Period from 30/06/16 to 30/06/17

Description	Recorded Value	Valuation Date
ASSETS		
PT CASH ACCOUNT	1968607.81	30-JUN-17
Totals	1968607.81	
Total Assets		
Total Liabilities		
Net Recorded Value		
1968607.81	0.00	1968607.81