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NEWS RELEASE

GVDB Trust releases first round of funds

(PERTH) – The Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust (the Trust) is pleased to announce the first round of projects to be funded in the Great Victoria Desert (GVD).

The Trust was established by the Tropicana Joint Venture (AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd 70% and manager, Independence Group NL 30%) as part of its offsets strategy for the Tropicana Gold Mine in Western Australia.

Tropicana is located 330 kilometres east-northeast of Kalgoorlie-Boulder on the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert.

The largest project – running for three years – will be the adaptive management partnership project. This project involves a collaborative partnership between Traditional Owners and five key stakeholders with interests in the GVD: Pila Nguru (the Spinifex and Pilki people), Rangelands NRM, Greening Australia, Central Desert Native Title Service (representing the Yilka people), Conservation Management and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. As the first stage, the partnership will develop a Bioregional Plan for the GVD. This plan is vital in determining the existing knowledge and knowledge gaps in the region.

The Trust has also awarded Gaia Resources a project to deliver a 'Knowledge Hub', which will collate and spatially represent all known (and available) biodiversity data for the region.

This exciting project, based on infrastructure provided through Rangelands NRM, will allow different users to access information on the GVD in an integrated platform, combining data from a range of sources, in an easy to use visual format. It is hoped that different stakeholders operating in the region will see the ongoing benefit of knowledge sharing and contribute relevant information to the Knowledge Hub.

Other funded projects relate directly to the threatened species in the region. The Department of Parks and Wildlife provided a thorough, integrated approach to Sandhill Dunnart research.

By combining two projects, the development of a standardised survey and monitoring protocol will inform a baseline survey for the Sandhill Dunnart.

Additionally, the Department of Parks and Wildlife will also undertake a project to collate Malleefowl records for the region. This will result in the creation of an active database specifically for Malleefowl records in the GVD.

The Trust anticipates that these initial projects will set a strong foundation for increasing the collective knowledge on how to best manage the GVD for the benefit of biodiversity and key threatened species. The Trust also welcomes the Adaptive Management Partnership's clear focus on Traditional Owners being assisted and supported to gather, understand and manage biodiversity and cultural values on their Country.

These initial projects should ensure that future activities funded in the region will undertake research and management in a consistent manner that allows traditional and scientific knowledge to be integrated for the best outcomes for biodiversity in the region.

The Trust received more than 40 proposals for the Expressions of Interest. The independent members of the Technical Advisory Panel, using a range of criteria conducted a thorough review of each proposal before selecting the successful applicants.

The Trust warmly thanks members of the Technical Advisory Panel, Dr Katherine Moseby, Dr Blair Parsons, Belinda Bastow and Ryan Ellis for their hard work and critical analysis in selecting the successful projects. GVDB Trust releases first round of funds.

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