

**TROPICANA JOINT VENTURE**

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30 August 2023

Environmental Audit Section  
Office of Compliance  
Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

Attn: Environmental Audit Section

**Re: Tropicana Gold Mine – Annual Compliance Report – EPBC 2008/4270**

In accordance with Condition 8 of the Tropicana Gold Mine (TGM) EPBC approval No. 2008/4270, please find attached the Annual Compliance Report for the 2022/2023 reporting period.

Should you have any queries with the attached report or require any additional information please contact me on (08) 9265 2215 or email [tgmapprovals@anglogoldashanti.com](mailto:tgmapprovals@anglogoldashanti.com)

Yours faithfully,



Rosemarie Lane  
Manager: Environment Operations  
**AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited**



# **Tropicana Gold Mine**

## **Annual Compliance Report**

### **EPBC No. 2008/4270**

**July 2022 to June 2023**



<b>DOCUMENT STATUS</b>				
<b>REVISION</b>	<b>STATUS DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PREPARED BY</b>	<b>APPROVED BY</b>
1	Internal – Issued for Comment	18/08/2023	N Courts	L Pradella
2	External – Approved for Publication	28/08/2023	L Pradella	R Lane

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## 1 Introduction

The Tropicana Gold Mine (TGM, the Project) is located approximately 330 km east-northeast of Kalgoorlie on the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert on vacant crown land (Figure 1). The Tropicana Joint Venture in Western Australia was formed in 2002 between AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd (70% and manager) and Independence Group NL – IGO (30%) and as of 31 May 2021, AFB Resources Pty Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of Regis Resources Ltd) acquired the 30% stake previously held by IGO Ltd.

In June 2008, the Tropicana Gold Project was referred to the Department of Environment (DoE) for consideration and assessment under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). On 13 December 2010, AGAA was granted approval under the EPBC Act (EPBC 2008/4270) to establish the TGM and associated infrastructure.

Condition 8 of EPBC 2008/4270 requires AGAA to develop and submit an Annual Report that demonstrates compliance with the conditions of the approval by 31 August each year. A declaration of accuracy regarding the contents of this report is provided in **Appendix A**.

This report addresses the status and compliance of the Project against the conditions referred to in EPBC 2008/4270 (as amended on 25 November 2019) for activities undertaken during the reporting period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and is the twelfth report associated with TGM since the commencement of the Project.

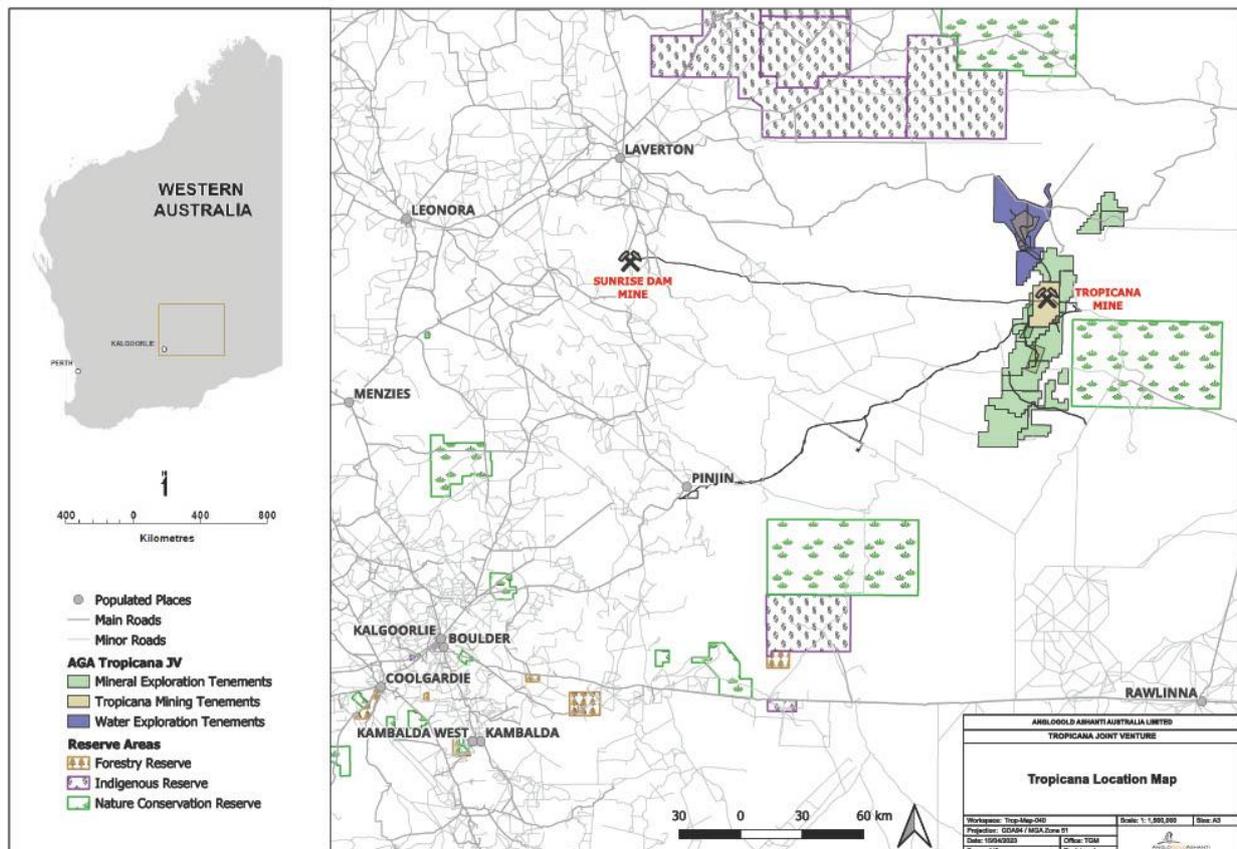


Figure 1: Project Location

## 2 Project Overview

TGM is an open cut and underground gold mine and processing plant operation focused on the mining of the Tropicana, Havana, and Boston Shaker deposits. Construction commenced in late 2010, culminating with first gold production during commissioning on 29 September 2013, with the site officially opened on 6 March 2014.

The TGM Project includes (Figure 2; Figure 3):

- Operational Area containing the pits, underground operation, waste landforms, stockpiles, tailings storage facility (TSF), process plant, village, aerodrome and other supporting infrastructure;
- Infrastructure corridor including an access road and communications corridor linking the operational area to existing communications and road networks in Kalgoorlie; and
- Water supply area providing processing water to the site.

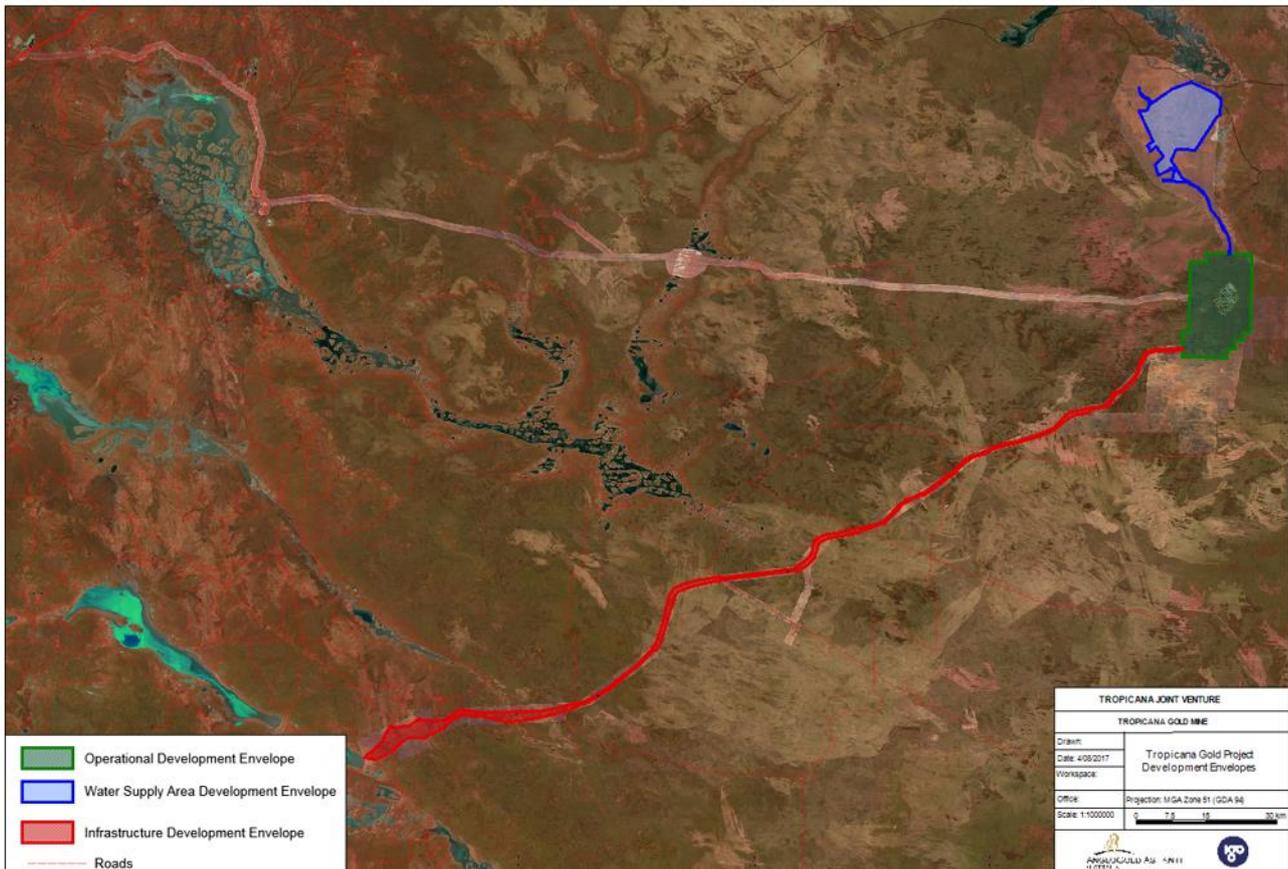


Figure 2: TGM Disturbance Footprint

## 2.1 2022 / 2023 Key Operational Activities

A total of 3231.41 hectares (ha), excluding exploration, has been disturbed to-date for ongoing development of TGM (as of the September 2022 Annual Aerial reconciliation).

Annual aerial photography flown in September 2022 was utilised to reconcile and validate the disturbance footprint across the Project area for the last reporting period. Disturbance features captured by aerial imagery are digitised to create GIS shapefiles which are used to generate disturbance data. This process provides TGM with an annual verified and reconciled disturbance dataset.

During the reporting period (1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023):

- 127.82 ha was newly disturbed for mine development activities.
- 30.79 million tonnes (Mt) of material were mined from the open pits and underground mines, comprising 5.53 Mt of ore, 25.26 Mt of waste rock, and 64,000 tonnes of growth medium.
- Total volume of water abstracted from the TGM borefields was 5,673,137 kilolitres (kL), comprising of 2,529,869 kL from the Process Water Supply borefield and 3,143,241 kL from the Kamikaze borefield.
- 9.74 million tonnes (Mt) of ore crushed at the processing plant.
- 438,433 ounces (oz) of gold produced.

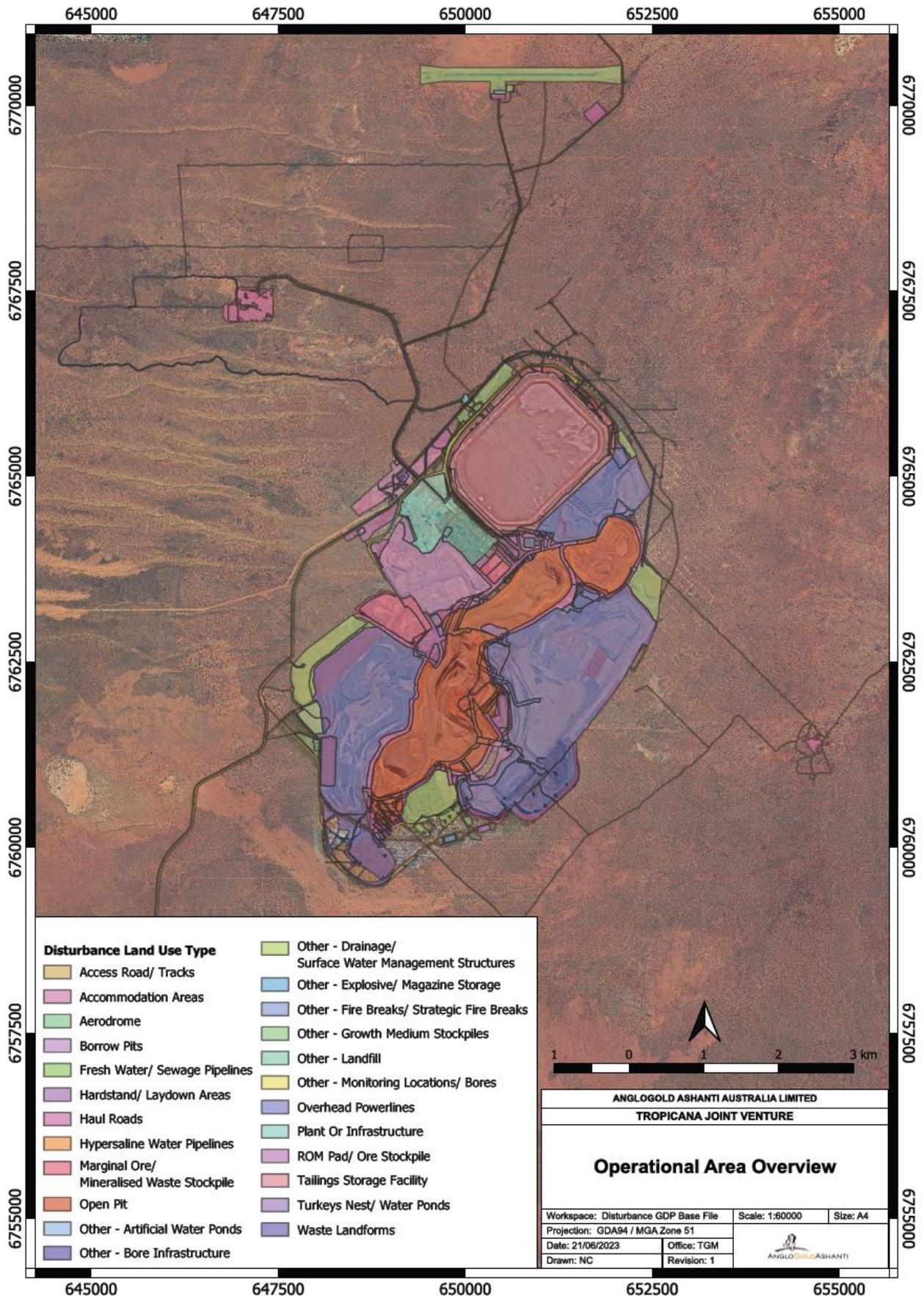


Figure 3: Operational Area Overview

### 3 Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust

The Great Victoria Desert (GVD) Biodiversity Trust (the Trust) was established in November 2013 with the aim of delivering benefits to threatened species, landscape scale biodiversity and the communities in the region. The Trust forms the centrepiece of the Tropicana Joint Venture (TJV) biodiversity offsets strategy. The 2022/2023 period represented the tenth year of operation for the Trust.

The TJV has contributed initial funding to the Trust of \$1.6 million with additional annual contributions (Table 3-1).

**Table 3-1: TJV Contributions to the GVD Trust**

Year	Amount
2014 (Initial Funding)	\$1,600,000
2015	\$309,040
2016	\$326,872
2017	\$333,684
2018	\$342,402
2019	\$366,985
2020	\$371,692
2021	\$379,803
2022	\$385,035
2023	\$394,669

During the 2022/2023 reporting period, the Trust initiated and/or completed the following works:

#### 3.1 GVD Landscape Conservation Initiative (LCI)

The Landscape Conservation Initiative (LCI), which commenced in 2020, is an integrated landscape management project in the south-west of the GVD focusing on prescribed, small-scale, cultural burns and introduced predator control. In addition, the Trust will monitor the effectiveness of management by investigating the response of biodiversity communities (small mammals, including Sandhill Dunnarts, reptiles, Malleefowl activity), and introduced predators including other feral species observed, before and after land management activities (fire/baiting) over an initial 10-year period. Monitoring will be compared between paired landscapes (one managed and one unmanaged/reference) in the GVD.

This project was put on hold due to the sites being used for the project becoming subject to Native Title claim and consent is required to be sought to continue the work. During 2023-2024 one of the main objectives will be to work with the Claimants to co-design the project.

##### 3.1.1 LCI – Baseline Fauna Survey (Completed August 2021)

A key part of the LCI project is understanding the fauna assemblages in the Management area (MA) and Reference area (RA) and seeing how they change in response to small-scale, cool, culturally sensitive burns. GHD was commissioned to undertake baseline fauna surveys in areas of different fire ages within both the MA and RA and their findings were provided to the Trust in August 2021.

In 2022 the Trust enlisted Curtin University to deliver the fauna monitoring program including camera maintenance, Malleefowl mound monitoring, pitfall trapping and eDNA analysis. Curtin University had started to prepare to undertake the fauna monitoring in early October 2022 however, in September 2022 the Central Desert group (representing Upurli Nguratja) requested that the fauna monitoring trip was cancelled. The project was put on delay.

This will be an ongoing project, aimed to be conducted biannually or annually to detect changes in species composition.

*Reference: Landscape Conservation Initiative - Baseline Fauna Survey Outcomes. GHD (2021). Available on the Trust's website.*

### 3.1.2 LCI – High Resolution Habitat Suitability Estimates for Sandhill Dunnarts

The GVDDBT is looking to develop high resolution construct models that are capable of pointing towards areas of the GVD where Sandhill Dunnarts are likely/highly likely to occur. This model will utilise data such as their dependence on Spinifex, fire data and climate data. The model is hopefully going to be completed in 2023. The second part of this project is going to include field verification to see if the model does highlight areas of increased population of the Sandhill Dunnart.

### 3.1.3 LCI – Vegetation and Soil survey (University of Adelaide - TERN)

As part of understanding the biodiversity of the MA and RA a full understanding of the vegetation and soils of the areas is required. The GVD Trust engaged TERN to design a vegetation and soil survey based around the MA and RA incorporating fire age information and aligned with existing fauna plot locations (where possible). The fieldwork was completed by TERN in May 2022 and all of the samples have been processed by the WA herbarium in March 2023. As a part of this project TERN are going to provide training in soil sampling technique to the Indigenous ranger groups. This has not yet been undertaken.

## 3.2 Indigenous Fire Management – The Indigenous Desert Alliance

Fire is one of the largest threats facing biodiversity in the GVD. Very limited fire management occurs across the GVD due to limited funding and resources allocated to fire management in remote areas. Traditional owners have stewardship over the land and are the custodians for the past, present and future management of the land. Recognising this connection to country, the Trust developed a partnership with the Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA) to help support and empower all the Indigenous groups in the GVD to undertake culturally appropriate fire management. The project was previously funded for one year with \$60,000. The GVDDBT have agreed to continue funding this project.

## 3.3 Spinifex Biodiversity Project (Spinifex Rangers)

In April 2023, the Spinifex Biodiversity Project was initiated to document the traditional knowledge of Spinifex elders. The project will see local rangers visiting/surveying sites which hold cultural and biodiversity significance based on traditional knowledge. An Ecologist will work with the rangers to document their knowledge. The second phase of the project will involve land management activities to protect the native species such as the Sandhill Dunnarts and Malleefowl.

A copy of the GVD Trust Annual Report is provided in **Appendix B**.

#### 4 Compliance Audit: EPBC No.2008/4270 Conditions

An internal compliance audit against the EPBC Act approval conditions has been undertaken for the reporting period and is provided in Table 4.1.

Conditions have been updated to reflect the Approved Variation of Conditions dated 25/11/2019. The audit findings indicate that AGAA was fully compliant with all Conditions.

**Table 4-1: Compliance Audit**

Condition No.	Condition	Status	Evidence
1	<p><b><u>Commencement</u></b></p> <p>Within 14 days of commencement of the action, the proponent must notify the Minister in writing of the actual date of commencement</p>	Compliant	Letter from AGAA on behalf of the Tropicana JV dated 12 May 2011 to SEWPaC advising that construction of TGM had commenced, starting with the site access road.
2	<p><b><u>Footprint</u></b></p> <p>The proponent must ensure that clearing of vegetation is restricted to a maximum of 3,540 ha within the Disturbance Footprint.</p> <p>Changes to the Disturbance Footprint may be made if they result in no net adverse impact on EPBC listed flora and fauna species. The proponent must seek the approval of the Minister in writing for any changes to the Disturbance Footprint prior to any disturbance occurring outside the Disturbance Footprint. If the Minister considers that the changes will result in an adverse impact on EPBC listed species, the Minister may request the proponent to provide specified information or to make specified changes to the Disturbance Footprint. The proponent must comply with any such request.</p>	Compliant	<p>A total of 3231.41 hectares (ha), excluding exploration, has been disturbed to-date for ongoing development of TGM (as of the September 2022 flyover).</p> <p>Annual aerial photography flown in September 2022 was utilised to reconcile and validate the disturbance footprint across the Project area for the last reporting period. Disturbance features captured by aerial imagery are digitised to create GIS shapefiles which are used to generate disturbance data. This process provides TGM with an annual verified and reconciled disturbance dataset. Current disturbance figures use the most recent flyover data as a base but, the shapefiles are modified based on Ground Disturbance Permit (GDP) applications and all new clearing /land use change is captured in a disturbance database. This database displays the most current data in the TGM Disturbance Tracking Portal.</p> <p>The next fly over is scheduled for September 2023 to reconcile the disturbance from the last year.</p> <p>Accurate disturbance records are maintained, and reconciled data provided in each annual report to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) as required by tenement conditions. Disturbance data is also used to calculate the TGM contribution to the Mine Rehabilitation Fund payment and for the GVD Biodiversity Trust annual contribution.</p>
3	<p><b><u>Monitoring of Flora</u></b></p> <p>This Condition was Revoked as per Approved Variation of Conditions dated 25/11/2019. Flora monitoring as formerly described under this condition is now solely reported to the WA DWER (EPA Branch) in the Compliance Annual Report against conditions of Ministerial Statement 839.</p>	Not applicable	N/A
4	<p><b><u>Management Strategy</u></b></p> <p>The proponent must implement the 'Tropicana Gold Project Threatened Species and Communities Management Strategy (TSCMS) – Version 3.0, September 2009', or subsequent revisions approved by the WA EPA. The proponent must provide the Department with the revised strategy within 14 days of approval by the WA EPA.</p>	Compliant	<p>The TGM Threatened Species and Communities Management Plan (TSCMP) forms part of the Project's Integrated Management System which is certified in accordance with ISO 14001 and OSHAS 18001.</p> <p>The (previously named) Threatened Species and Communities Management Strategy (TSCMS) was originally compiled in September 2009, updated in March 2014 and subsequently revised in December 2014 following consultation with the Western Australian Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). A copy of the revised TSCMS was provided to the Department with the 2014/2015 Annual Compliance Report. During the 2017/2018 reporting period, a draft 2017 TSCMS was developed and provided to DBCA for review. TGM received feedback and recommendations from DBCA and consideration of the recommendations and required updates remained in progress during the 2018/2019 reporting period.</p> <p>In December 2021 an updated TSCMP was submitted via email to DBCA (murray.baker@dbca.wa.gov.au) and DWER (<a href="mailto:registar@dwer.wa.gov.au">registar@dwer.wa.gov.au</a>). A copy of the revised TSCMP was submitted with the 2021/2022 Annual Compliance Report.</p> <p>During the current reporting period, the annual internal review of the conservation status of species of Threatened and other conservation significant species and communities and annual review of EPBC Act, Biodiversity Act and DBCA priority lists was completed, and Appendices B and C of the TGM Threatened Species and Communities Management Plan (TSCMP) were updated accordingly. No other changes were made.</p>
5	<p><b><u>Revisions to strategies</u></b></p> <p>If the Minister believes that it is necessary or desirable for the better protection of the <i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Malleefowl), or other listed EPBC flora and fauna species to do so, the Minister may request that the proponent make specified revisions to the strategy referred to in condition 4 and submit the revised strategy for the Minister's approval. The proponent must comply with any such request. The revised approved strategy must be implemented. Unless the Minister has approved the revised strategy, then the proponent must continue to implement the strategy referred to in condition 4.</p>	Not Applicable	No such requests were received during the reporting period.

Condition No.	Condition	Status	Evidence
6	<p><b><u>Offsets – Biodiversity Trust Fund</u></b></p> <p>(a) The proponent must fund and develop the Great Victoria Desert – Biodiversity Trust Fund (the Trust), to achieve the following objectives:</p> <p>(i) Develop a Bioregional Management Plan (the Plan) for the Great Victoria Desert Bioregions 1 and 2 (the Trust Area, at Appendix B). The Plan must identify knowledge gaps relating to species and communities of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act and make recommendations for programs to address those gaps.</p> <p>(ii) Facilitate priority research identified in the Plan at the landscape level and into species and communities of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act. Research outcomes must include a review of the conservation status of species and communities of national environmental significance and the development of predictive models.</p> <p>(iii) Fund on-ground environmental and conservation management at the landscape level, with emphasis on net conservation benefits to threatened species and communities of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act. This must include actions identified in recovery plans for the Marsupial Mole, Sandhill Dunnart and Malleefowl.</p> <p>These objectives must not be modified without the approval of the Minister.</p> <p>The proponent must commence implementation of the Trust on commencement of the action.</p> <p>(b) Before commencement of the action, the proponent must provide the Minister with a Project Plan for the Trust specifying activities to meet the Trust objectives, the amount of funding the proponent will provide to the Trust, and an indicative budget for each of the activities. The action must not commence until the Minister has approved the Project Plan. The approved Project Plan must be implemented. If the Trust Board approves any modifications to the Project Plan, the proponent must advise the Minister of the changes within 14 days of their approval, and the modified plan implemented.</p> <p>(c) If, at any time during the life of this approval, the Minister is not satisfied that the Trust is achieving its objectives relevant to matters of national environmental significance, the Minister may require the proponent to undertake additional measures and/or provide additional funding to the Trust or to activities specified in the Project Plan. The proponent must comply with any such requirement.</p> <p>(d) The proponent (approval holder) must provide the Department by 31 August of each year with an annual progress report describing the actions taken and financial payments made over the preceding 12 months (between 30 June to 1 July of the following year) to implement the objectives of the Biodiversity Trust Fund as described in approval condition 6(a). The annual progress report must be made publicly available on the proponent's website. This report can be submitted as an attachment to the annual compliance report required by condition 8.</p>	Compliant	<p>During the reporting period, the GVD Trust funded or contributed funds to the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GVD Landscape Conservation Initiative – baseline fauna survey</li> <li>GVD Landscape Conservation Initiative – high resolution suitability estimates for Sandhill Dunnarts</li> <li>GVD Landscape Conservation Initiative – vegetation and soil survey</li> <li>Indigenous Desert Alliance – Indigenous Fire Management</li> <li>Spinifex Biodiversity Project</li> </ul> <p>The 2022/2023 Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust Annual Report is provided in <b>Appendix B</b>.</p>
7	<p><b><u>Records</u></b></p> <p>The proponent must maintain accurate records substantiating all activities associated with or relevant to the above conditions of approval, including measures taken to implement the plans required by this approval and the objectives of the Trust, and make them available upon request to the Department. Records may be subject to audit by the Department or an independent auditor in accordance with section 458 of the EPBC Act, or used to verify compliance with the conditions of approval. Summaries of audits will be posted on the Department's website. The results of audits may also be publicised through the general media.</p>	Compliant	<p>Accurate records are maintained of all activities associated with, or relevant to, the conditions of the approval through the TGM records management system.</p> <p>Site reporting is undertaken, and the results of monitoring required to implement activities associated with EPBC 2008/4270 are recorded as required.</p>
8	<p><b><u>Compliance Reporting</u></b></p> <p>By 31 August each year from the commencement of the action, the proponent (approval holder) must submit to the Minister a report addressing compliance with the conditions of the approval over the preceding 12 months (between 30 June to 1 July of the following year). Annual reports must be provided until the Minister is satisfied that the proponent (approval holder) has complied with all conditions of the approval.</p>	Compliant	<p>This report is the twelfth annual compliance report to be prepared under EPBC Statement No. 2008/4270.</p>
9	<p><b><u>Substantial commencement</u></b></p> <p>If, at any time after five years from the date of this approval, the Minister notifies the proponent in writing that the Minister is not satisfied that there has been substantial commencement of the action, the action must not thereafter be commenced without the written agreement of the Minister.</p>	Compliant	<p>This action commenced in May 2011, a letter was submitted in May 2011 to SEWPaC advising that construction of TGM had commenced, starting with the site access road. No further action is required.</p>
10	<p><b><u>Audit</u></b></p> <p>Upon the direction of the Minister, the proponent must ensure that an independent audit of compliance with the conditions of approval is conducted, and a report submitted to the Minister. The independent auditor must be approved by the Minister prior to the commencement of the audit. Audit criteria must be agreed to by the Minister and the audit report must address the criteria to the satisfaction of the Minister</p>	Not Applicable	<p>No such requests were received during the reporting period.</p>

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## Appendix A Declaration of Accuracy

## DECLARATION OF ACCURACY

### Tropicana Gold Mine Annual Compliance Report

EPBC No. 2008/4270

July 2022 – June 2023

In making this declaration, I am aware that sections 490 and 491 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) make it an offence in certain circumstances to knowingly provide false or misleading information or documents. The offence is punishable on conviction by imprisonment or a fine, or both. I declare that all the information and documentation supporting this compliance report is true and correct in every particular. I am authorised to bind the approval holder to this declaration and that I have no knowledge of that authorisation being revoked at the time of making this declaration.

**Signed:**

**Full name:** Brad Catto

**Position:** General Manager: Tropicana Gold Mine

**Organisation:** AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited (ABN 42 008 737 424)

**Date:**

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## Appendix B 2022-2023 GVD Biodiversity Trust Annual Report

# Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust Annual Report



**2022-2023**

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

August 2023

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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 tenth Annual Report on our activities. This report is a public documentation of the Trust's activities for the 2022-23 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.

The Trust's activities this year have included continuing the implementation the integrated landscape scale management initiative focusing on fire management with the aim of providing landscape scale improvements to the desert biodiversity and habitats, in particular, those of the Malleefowl and Sandhill Dunnart. A key part of this work involves working with the Traditional Owners to draw on their extensive management knowledge and to assist in building their on-going management capacity. Strengthening these relationships will be a key objective of the Trust this coming year. However, this project was had to be put on hold as the sites for this work became subject to a Native Title claim, and we are required to get the consent of the Claimants to continue this work. A key project for 2023/24 will be to work with the Claimants to design the project so as to meet theirs and the Trust's objectives for on-going management of their land.

Two key initiatives were commenced last year. The first was to fund the fund Pilu Nguru Corporation representing the Spinifex People to carry out fauna survey on their land. Pilu Nguru would employ an experienced ecologist to design the survey and train Rangers to carry out that work. The second was to build a working relationship with Curtin University, where the Trust would fund projects that meet the objectives of the Trust and utilise the skills, knowledge and research interest of Curtin to improve the biodiversity of the desert. A significant project was defined, and funding agreed to but this project was also put on hold due to the Native Title claim.

The Trust respects the rights of the Claimants with respect to Native Title and will work collaboratively with the Claimants.

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 (TAP) for their high level and invaluable technical advice, all of whom have provided their time without being remunerated.

A special thanks to Kathryn Sinclair our Operations' Manager, and to Sean Tomlinson who joined the Trust this year on a part-time basis to develop a high resolution habitat suitability estimates for *S. psammophila*. They have both provided invaluable professional advice and support to the Management Panel, and Kathryn has expertly managed the various projects funded by the Trust. Sadly, Kathryn decided that it was time to pursue another career path and resigned in May. Kathryn has been with the Trust since its inception and been primarily responsible for building up the capacity of the Trust to deliver on its key objectives related to improving the biodiversity of the Great Victoria Desert. Kathryn was respected by all those she worked with as being dedicated, highly professional, a great communicator and a joy to work with. She will be missed.

In her place, we welcomed Ian Anderson from DBCA as the new Operations Manager who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in natural resource management, and is very well suited to the work of the Trust.

There was also a change in the membership of the Management Panel, with Nerilee Rockman stepping down as one of the AngloGold Ashanti representatives being replaced by Rose Lane. Nerilee was one of the founding members of the Panel, and during her time with us she has provided considered, balanced and invaluable input to all our decision-making.

Finally, I would like to formally acknowledge the strong and effective working relationship the Trust has with AngloGold Ashanti Australia, the DBCA, and with the WA Public Trustees who manage the funds for the Trust.

Dr Garry Middle



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## 1. Introduction

The Trust represents a unique model for an environmental offset in Western Australia, and Australia in general. It was established in 2014 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*. As of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021, Regis Resources has taken ownership of the Independence Group NL portion of the Tropicana Gold Mine.

The Trust's main purpose 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 projects supported in the 2022-2023 financial year have focused on planning towards a large-scale land management trial to understand the benefits or otherwise of patch burning to threatened species in the region.

The Trust's purposes, region of focus ('Trust Area') and governance structure are outlined in more detail below for context.

### 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.

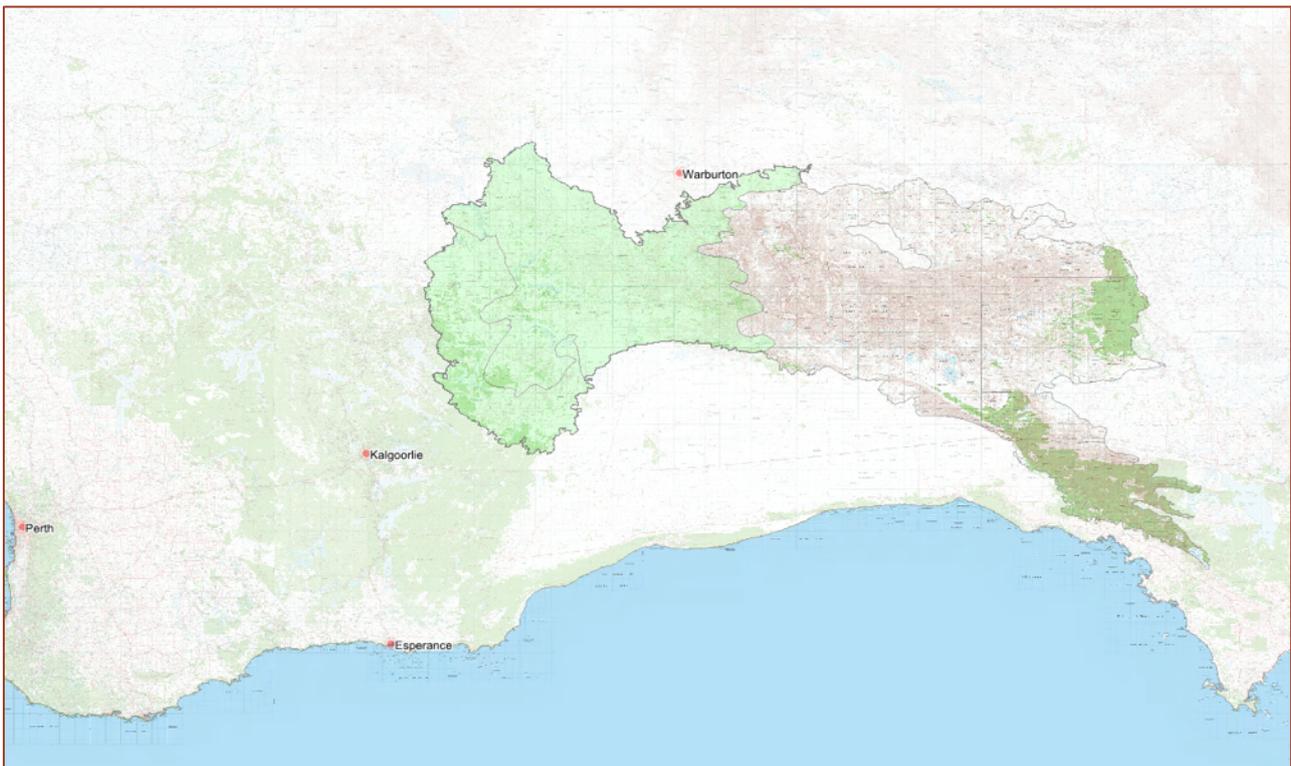
These objectives reflect those specified in Condition 6 of the *EPBC Act* approval 2008/4270 for the Tropicana Gold Mine.

## 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 (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 as listed by the *EPBC Act*.

## 2. Governance

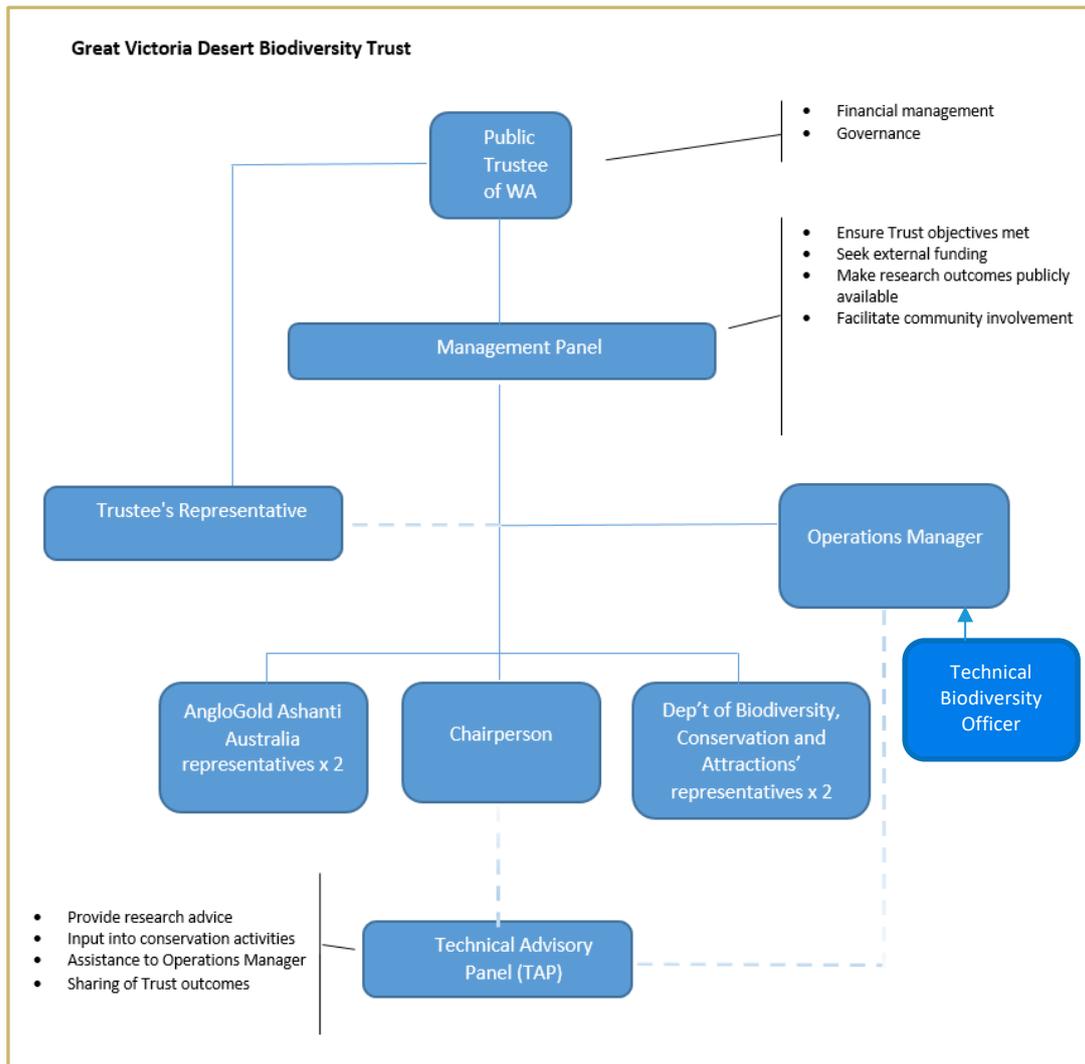
The governance structure of the Trust is a key component of ensuring stakeholder support and the delivery of activities that align with the Project Plan approved by the former DoE as part of the TGM *EPBC Act* approval (2008/4270). The governance structure of the Trust is outlined in Figure 2.

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 (DBCA) and AngloGold Ashanti Australia (AGAA), as well as an independent Chair.

The day-to-day management and operation of the Trust is the responsibility of the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager reports to the Trust's Management Panel via the Chair. The Operations Manager and the Management Panel are supported through the provision of technical advice from the Trust's Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). The TAP consists of six members with experience and technical expertise of the GVD and its landscape. The Trust's Operations Manager works as Chair of the TAP.

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 may 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 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. Additional background information is located at [www.gvdbiodiversitytrust.org.au/about-us](http://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

The Management Panel met on the following dates during the 2022-2023 financial year to ensure progress was maintained on key priorities:

- July 4 - in-person meeting;
- October 25 - in-person meeting;
- May 12 – in-person meeting to develop a strategic plan;
- June 2023 – an out of session meeting;

Out of session meetings are held to expedite the timely turnover of project decisions and other matters where the matter being considered is non-contentious. These meetings are held using an email to send information to Management Panel members, and responses received back by email. Should the matter turn out to be contentious, a formal in-person meeting would be held.

## 2.2 The Operations Manager

The Operations Manager maintained communication and meeting with the Chair of the Trust, the Technical Advisory Panel, and Management Panel, throughout the year to ensure the Trust maintained steady progress on key activities and maintained a strategic vision of the objectives of the Trust. Kathryn Sinclair remained in this role throughout 2022-23, working three days a week before finishing in the position May 2023. Ian Anderson has been successfully recruited into the OM role effective July 2023.

### 2.2.1 The Technical Biodiversity Officer

Jaume Rusalleda Alvarez (JRA) left the Trust in late 2022 to pursue other career options, and was replaced by Sean Tomlinson, who is working on a projected titled “High resolution habitat suitability estimates for *S. psammophila*: The project is describe in more detail below.

## 2.3 The Public Trustee

The Public Trustee’s representative provided assistance with financial documents to the Trust and project invoice payments. The Trustee has provided quarterly and annual financial statements.

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 oversight and guidance (as required) 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 research reports. The membership of the TAP has increased, with Mark Cowan joining the TAP as a representative from the Management Panel and Dr Stephen van Leeuwen remaining on the TAP despite leaving the Management Panel.

# 3. Trust Activities

## Projects and Activities

In the 2022-23 Financial Year (FY) the Trust commenced and completed several projects, summarised briefly below. Full reports have been made available to the public on the Trust website (<http://gvdbiodiversitytrust.org.au/>).

### 3.1 GVD Landscape Conservation Initiative (LCI)

As a first stage, the aim of the project is to see if introducing fire management activities, in a culturally sensitive manner, into an area of the GVD could increase the biodiversity and abundance of species in that area relative to an area not managed for fire. A secondary aim is to increase the amount of suitable habitat for SHD and protect suitable habitat for SHDs. This project aimed to create a landscape with a mosaic of fire ages. A landscape with multiple fire ages creates diverse habitat and reduces the likelihood of large, hot, summer fires extending over massive areas as patches of more recently burnt areas can act as fire breaks, with their reduced fuel loads. As part of this project the Trust determined it was necessary to get a baseline understanding of the species in the management area (to be treated with fire) relative to a reference area (in which fire would not be managed in any way).

This project was put on hold as the sites for this work became subject to a Native Title claim, and we are required to get the consent of the Claimants to continue this work. A key project for 2023/24 will be to work with the Claimants to co-design the project so as to meet theirs and the Trust's objectives for on-going management of their land.

#### 3.1.1 LCI – Baseline Fauna Survey

The Trust had been attempting to continue the LCI fauna monitoring by going out to Eol in 2021 however the costs came as too expensive to make it sustainable for the Trust to enter into an agreement with any of the applicants. In 2022 the Trust and Curtin had discussions and determined that Curtin would be capable of delivering the fauna monitoring program for a suitable budget, including camera maintenance, malleefowl mound monitoring, pitfall trapping and eDNA analysis. In September the Trust were in the final stages of negotiating a contract. Curtin, in a gesture of good faith ahead of the contract being signed, started preparation for undertaking the fauna monitoring in early October. At the very end of September Central Desert (representing Upurli Upurli Nguratja) requested that the fauna monitoring trip did not take place. The Trust agreed to delay the trip.

#### 3.1.2 LCI – High Resolution Habitat Suitability Estimates for Sandhill Dunnarts

Sean Tomlinson, with input from Katherine Moseby, is developing construct models complementary to the work reported by Riley et al.(2021), to develop higher-resolution (1 arc sec; approx. 625 m<sup>2</sup>) SDMs that capture the dependence of SHDs on *Triodia* spp., edaphic and geomorphological drivers, fire frequency and climate to elaborate on the likely patterns and associations driving habitat suitability, and also to explore likely patterns of population abundance of *S. psammophila*. Sean proposes to use occurrence data collected from a series of longitudinal studies in South Australia (Read et al. 2015; Moseby et al. 2016)

to train the models, largely because these data have resulted from reliable, high-intensity, balanced survey design.

It is hoped that this model will produce detailed areas within the GVD where SHDs are likely/highly likely to occur. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the end of calendar 2023, to be followed by field verification in 2024.

### 3.1.3 LCI – Vegetation and Soil survey (University of Adelaide - TERN)

As part of the LCI, TERN was contracted to undertake soil and vegetation sampling throughout the LCI project areas. There were several delays associated with this project due to COVID and difficulties for the TERN team to enter WA. The vegetation and soil sampling survey took place in May 2022. Samples have all been sent to the WA herbarium and all samples have recently been processed (March 2023). Training was meant to be delivered under this contract to learn how to take samples. The aim was that this training would also incorporate training for Indigenous ranger groups. TERN have indicated that they will provide training when requested (timing to be negotiated).

### 3.1.4 Indigenous Fire Management (Indigenous Desert Alliance, 2022 – Ongoing)

The Trust and IDA developed a partnership / funding agreement in January 2022 to build outcomes in the Indigenous Ranger groups in the GVD. The funding agreement has seen IDA officers spend considerable amounts of time on-country building the capacity of particularly the Yilka land management team and the Spinifex rangers. IDA has also begun to build stronger relationships with rangers in Warburton. The project was funded previously for one year for the amount of \$60,000. It was agreed to continue the funding of this project.

### 3.1.5 Spinifex Biodiversity Project (Spinifex Rangers)

The project facilitates the documentation of the traditional knowledge of Spinifex elders, allow rangers to visit and survey sites which were significant culturally and significant for their biodiversity based on traditional knowledge and employ an ecologist to work with the rangers and elders to undertake the documentation and the field trips. The second phase of the project would involve land management activities to protect the species. Sandhill dunnarts and malleefowl will be a significant focus of the project and cameras have already been established in areas where habitat has been assessed to be highly suitable.

This project commenced in April this year.

## 4. Finances, Administration and Allocation of Funds

### 4.1 Finances

The annual contribution from the Tropicana Joint Venture (TJV) to the Trust in 2021-22 FY was \$394,669.00 based on an annual fee of \$100,000 plus \$80 per hectare of cleared footprint for the TGM. The Trust also received \$23,921.16 interest from the funds held on its behalf by the Public Trustee (Table 5). An additional \$10,080.00 was received as a GST refund.

A total of \$155,496.50.66 was spent directly on projects in the 2022-23 financial year. This figure does not include the time spent by the Operations Manager or Technical Biodiversity Officer managing these projects, or costs associated with asset management fees, or administration-related expenses.

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 Public Trustee has continued to provide strong support and guidance in 2022-22 so that the Trust 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 again this financial year and confirmed that the Trust's spending, accounting and financial reporting have been conducted appropriately. Table 1 summarises the key spending and income of the Trust for 2022-23.

**Table 1: Summary of income and expenditure for the Trust during the 2022-2023 financial year**

Item	Income	Expenditure
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Annual contribution (AGAA)</b>	\$394,669.00	
<b>Interest</b>	\$23,921.16	
<b>Expenditure: management and administration</b>		
Salary (Operations Manager and Technical Biodiversity Officer - project management and administration*)		\$108,662.56
Public Trustee asset management and transaction fees		\$11,814.16
Conference attendance and presentation delivery, including airfares		\$2,808.00
<b>Expenditure: Projects</b>		
Spinifex Biodiversity Project (Spinifex Rangers) - Pilu Nguru		\$6,633.91
Vegetation and soil survey		\$8,822.50
<b>Refund</b>		
Refund of GST on expenditure	\$10,080.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$428,670.16</b>	<b>\$138,741.13</b>

**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 TGM continues to be the Trust's sole financial contributor.

## 5. Future Direction

In May 2023, the Management Panel held a special meeting to develop a strategic plan for the next 5 years. Members of the TAP were also invited to attend. In summary, the Strategic Plan set the following priorities for action:

1. Communication our work better and more broadly. The Trust has produced some very useful data and documents, and these should be made more widely available, including as academic papers. Part of this should include demonstrating the effectiveness of our work.
2. Engage more directly with the Traditional Owners groups to build strong working relationships. This includes co-designing the Landscape Conservation Initiative. Explore other programs and projects that would meet the Trust's objectives and provide benefits for Traditional Owners.
3. For any new projects, the preference will be to work with, and build relationships with, research and other organisations who have a long term interest in the better management of biodiversity in the GVD rather than consultants. Consider partnership with Curtin for a major ARC grant.

As well, 2024 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Trust and a special event will be held to mark the milestone.

## Appendix 1: Statement of Transactions 2022-23 FY

### Statement of Transactions



MR . GREAT VICTORIA DESERT BIODIVERSITY TRUST FUND

Client Reference: 33111845 Contact: TM29

Public Trustee Activity TRST / 1

Statement of Transactions Number 13

Statement Period from 30/06/22 to 30/06/23

Date	Transaction Details	Payments	Receipts
	<b>Opening Balance as per Statement of Account Dated 30/06/2022</b>		<b>1,928,708.90</b>
	<b>OTHER PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS</b>		
19-AUG-22	INDIGENOUS FIRE 2ND INSTA - INDIGENOUS DESERT ALLIANCE	16,500.00	
24-AUG-22	VEGETATION & SOIL SURVEY - THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE	8,222.50	
30-SEP-22	CR INTEREST 30/09/2022		4,845.74
10-OCT-22	YERALY IRIDIUM DATA - ENVIRO PAUL	561.00	
10-OCT-22	CONFERENCE ACCOMMODATION - INDIGENOUS DESERT ALLIANCE	1,608.00	
21-OCT-22	CHARTER FLIGHT - INDIGENOUS DESERT ALLIANCE	1,200.00	
17-NOV-22	ANNUAL GST REFUND 2022		10,080.00
22-FEB-23	FINAL FUNDING INSTALMENT - INDIGENOUS DESERT ALLIANCE	16,500.00	
23-FEB-23	THIRD FUNDING INSTALMENT - INDIGENOUS DESERT ALLIANCE	16,500.00	
02-MAR-23	SORTING & IDENTIFICATION - COLLINS MARGARET DR	9,174.00	
15-MAR-23	TERN SPECIMENS - SHIBI ULLAS CHANDRAN	600.00	
31-MAR-23	CR INTEREST 31/03/2023		19,075.42
03-APR-23	AGA ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION		394,669.00
17-APR-23	ADVERT FOR EMPLOYMENT - NRMJOBS PTY LTD	165.00	
24-MAY-23	CHAIR OUT OF POCKET EXP. - VISION ENVIRONMENT	768.34	
24-MAY-23	SPINIFEX PROJ MILESTONE 1 - PILA NGURU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION	88,000.00	
14-JUN-23	TRUST EXPENSES - ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI	108,662.56	
30-JUN-23	ASSET MANAGEMENT FEE	11,814.16	
30-JUN-23	TRANSACTIONAL FEE	2,661.00	
	<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>2,074,442.50</b>
	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>Total Receipts</b>
	<b>1,928,708.90</b>	<b>282,936.56</b>	<b>428,670.16</b>
			<b>Closing Balance</b>
			<b>2,074,442.50</b>

**Statement of Assets & Liabilities**



**MR . GREAT VICTORIA DESERT BIODIVERSITY TRUST FUND**

**Client Reference: 33111845 Contact: TM29**

**Public Trustee Activity TRST / 1**

Statement of Assets & Liabilities Number 13

Statement Period from 30/06/22 to 30/06/23

Description	Recorded Value	Valuation Date
<b>ASSETS</b>		
PT CASH ACCOUNT	2,074,442.50	30-JUN-23
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,074,442.50</b>	
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>Net Recorded Value</b>
<b>2,074,442.50</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,074,442.50</b>