



# Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust

The Great Victoria Desert Biodiversity Trust was established by the Tropicana Joint Venture (AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd 70% and manager, Independence Group NL 30%) as part of its biodiversity offsets strategy for the Tropicana Gold Mine in Western Australia. Tropicana is located 330 kilometres east-northeast of Kalgoorlie on the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert.

## What are biodiversity offsets?

When a mining or development proposal is likely to have significant residual impacts on biodiversity or matters of national environmental significance, state and federal legislation is triggered to ensure the proposal does not result in a net loss of biodiversity. As figure 1 shows, the offset relates to the residual environmental impacts that cannot be avoided, minimized or restored. Offsets take a variety of forms depending on the size, scale and region of the impact. Common offsets include 'like for like' land purchased for conservation or funds provided to the government to undertake related biodiversity work. Other offsets include education, on-ground management, research, and recovery plans.

## What is unique about the Trust?

The GVD Biodiversity Trust is designed to benefit a broad range of stakeholders in this remote part of the world. It is the only Trust of its kind operating in the WA mining and environmental landscape.

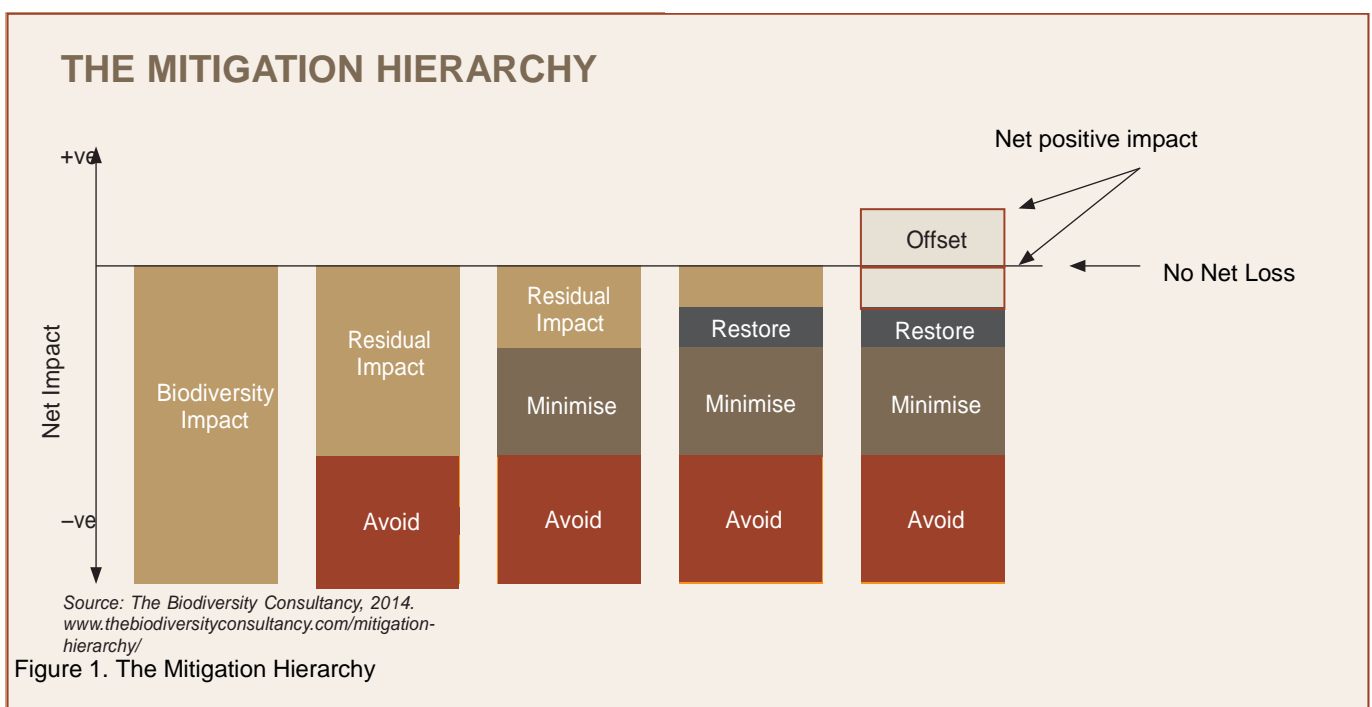
The structure of the Trust allows a range of offset activities to take place including engaging with Traditional Owners to conduct on ground conservation activities, research threatened species and develop long term planning activities to improve the understanding of different species in this remote and under studied region.

Two very important components of the Trust are:

- 1) Building a solid platform to ensure all work conducted in the region is integrated and builds knowledge.
- 2) All information generated by the Trust is publicly shared to facilitate understanding of biodiversity in the region. This also avoids duplication of work.

The Trust has achieved this through its objectives:

- 1) Develop a Bioregional Plan to collate existing knowledge of biodiversity across the Great Victoria Desert (IBRA sub-regions 1 and 2) as well as future management actions.
- 2) Facilitate priority research into threatened species listed and biodiversity, at a landscape level.
- 3) Facilitate on-ground conservation activities to benefit threatened species including the Sandhill Dunnart and Malleefowl.
- 4) Facilitate Traditional Owner involvement conservation activities





## What are the benefits of the Trust?

The Tropicana JV partners wanted to ensure that the funding they provided as an offset had a direct benefit for the area and people in the vicinity of the gold mine.

Research into biodiversity in this region is extremely limited and the Trust provides an ideal vehicle for the Tropicana JV to contribute to enduring scientific knowledge about threatened species and the landscape ecology. The Trust will make all research findings public to increase the ability of researchers, industry, government and the community to work together to improve the outcomes for threatened species and for preserving biodiversity and ecological functioning across the landscape.

Conventional models for environmental offsets in WA usually consist of a company purchasing an area of land similar to the area of impact and ensuring that the land is protected, improved and managed for conservation in perpetuity, effectively 'offsetting' the impacted site. This method is frequently criticised, as the land purchased may not fully represent the biodiversity of the area impacted by a mine or development. Another method of offsetting consists of a company providing funds to a government agency to conduct offsetting/conservation activities on its behalf. The model for the GVD Biodiversity Trust aims to improve scientific knowledge of the Great Victoria Desert and the threatened species and communities within it.

Where opportunities are identified, direct onsite ground rehabilitation or conservation activities will be funded through the Trust and it can also provide direct improvements to the landscape through funding organisations to do on-ground work. The Trust will also work with Traditional Owners, government and NGOs to improve employment outcomes and to utilise traditional ecological knowledge to increase biodiversity knowledge.

The GVD Biodiversity Trust model ensures that the maximum funds possible are directed to the region and to obtaining enduring positive environmental outcomes for EPBC list threatened species and communities and the broader environment.

## How does it work?

The Public Trustee of WA. Is the trustee for the GVD Biodiversity Trust.

The Public Trustee releases funds, in line with the Trust Deed and the requirements of the Tropicana EPBC approval, as directed by the Management Panel.

The Management Panel comprises representatives from the WA Department of Parks and Wildlife, AngloGold Ashanti Australia on behalf of the Tropicana JV, and has an Independent Chair.

The decisions of the Management Panel are guided by a Technical Advisory Panel made up of technical specialists, representatives from environmental NGOs and community members. A Trust Co-ordinator co-ordinates the activities, funding and administration of the Trust.

## How is it funded?

The Tropicana JV made an initial contribution of A\$1.6 million to the Trust and will contribute approximately \$4.4 million over Tropicana's current expected 10-year mine life.

The annual contributions to the Trust will comprise an annual fee and \$/hectare per annum for the cleared footprint.

To ensure the Trust delivers the maximum benefit, the administration costs are capped at 20%.

The Trust, now fully established as an independent entity, has the capacity to expand its scope and work with other companies in the region to offset their impacts on biodiversity.

### Contact Details

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