

# IA Symposium - Reimagining approvals - Strategic approaches to support Impact Assessment

Landscape IA: The Great Victoria  
Desert Trust Fund

Garry Middle

# What is 'landscape'



# Its meaning

- “...an understanding of landscape moves from being a more or less visible and tangible entity to being inclusive of the subjective matter of the mind. In such light the importance of the perceptions of those who experience the landscape is drawn into focus. Comprehending the perceptions, meanings and values of a landscape is based on the knowledge and its articulations by those who encounter the landscape.”

- Butler and Åkerskog 2014, Awareness-raising of landscape in practice. An analysis of Landscape Character Assessments in England

# Assessment and decision making

- Inevitably about values
  - what it 'is'
  - What we perceive, assign or hold
- It is
  - Biophysical
  - Built
- Perceived
  - Recreational
  - Aesthetic
  - Economic etc





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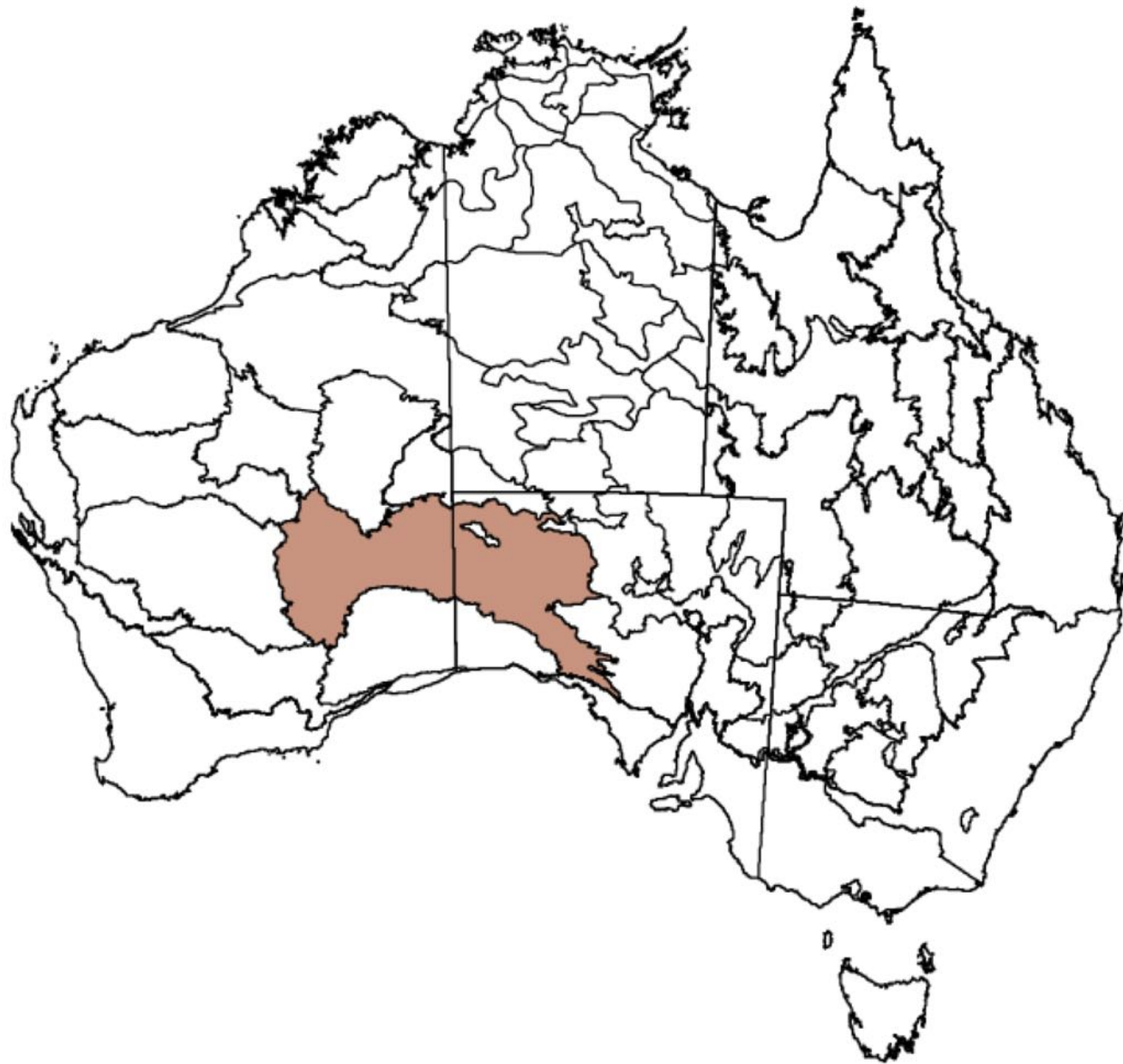
# Assessment at a landscape scale

- SEA of regional land use plans
  - Focus on development
  - Separation – zoning – of land uses
  - ‘Proponent’ is Local or State Government – limited resources
  - Funding comes from developers
  - Acceptance they have to managed local impacts
  - Limitations of definition of ‘environment’
  - Problem of timescales

# Another way – Great Victoria Desert Trust Fund



# Figure 1 Location of the Great Victoria Desert bioregion







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# Tropicana gold mine



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Figure 2: Project footprint and layout of key components



# Assessed Impacts

- Area of disturbance around 3,440 Ha
- No clearing of any EPA 'critical assets',
  - in this case TECs or declared rare species.
- EPBC Act issues – all unknowns
  - One Priority Ecological Community (PEC) could be within the proposed infrastructure corridor (Yellow Sandplains Community).
  - Endangered Sandhill Dunnart known in GVD
  - Threatened Malleefowl known in GVD
  - Neither found in surveys



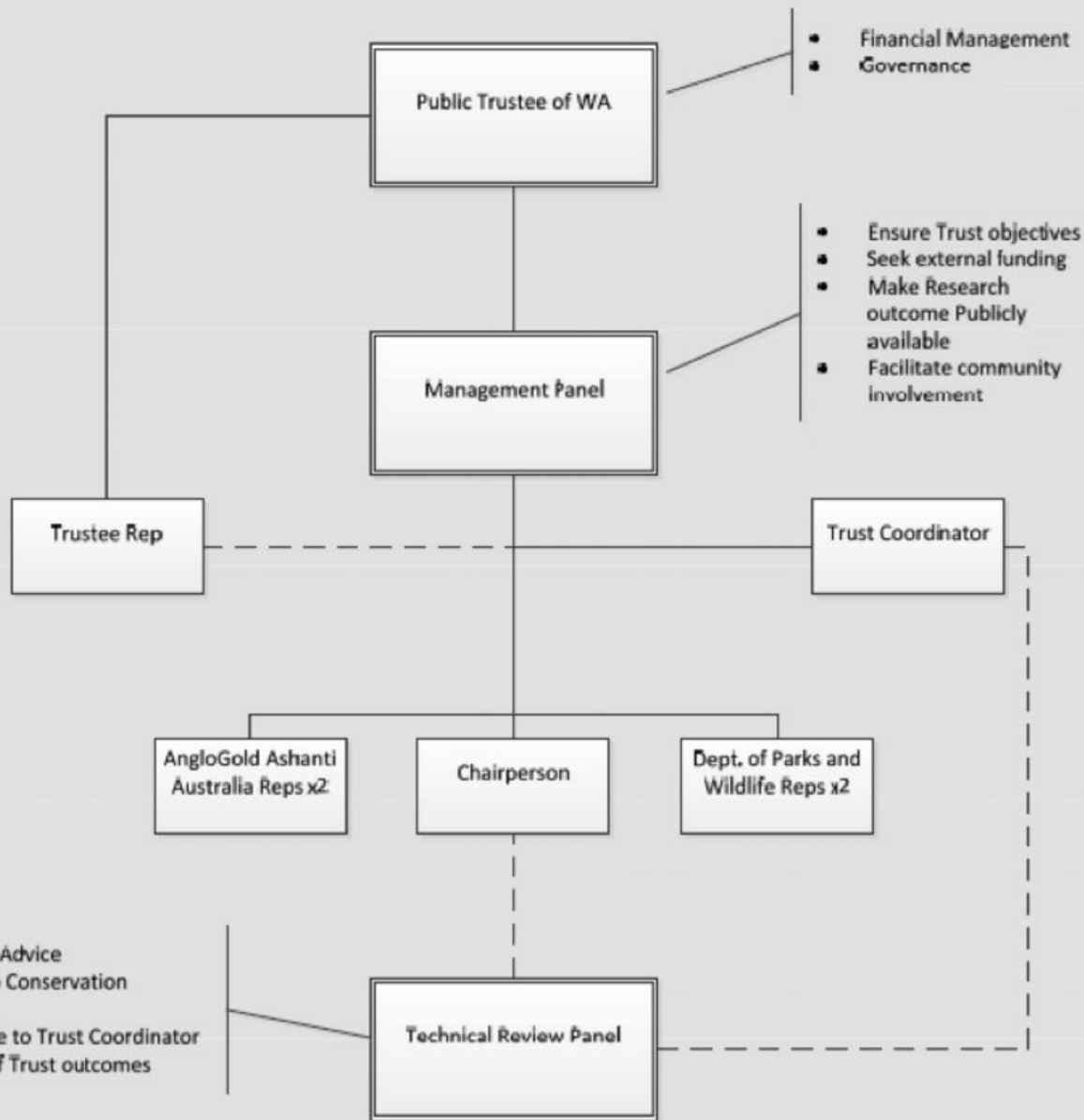


# EPBC Act assessment

- Offset proposed because of the risk of impacts.
- Direct
  - restoring & rehabilitating at least 100 ha of degraded areas outside the project area
- Indirect
  - Trust fund
    - research and rehabilitation activities in the broader GVD,
    - fund environmental education and on-ground conservation works by community groups, especially the local Aboriginal communities.
    - Using the DoE calculator, between \$2.2 and \$4 million dollars depending on the final size of the footprint of the mine



Great Victoria Desert  
Biodiversity Trust



# GVD Trust

# Projects

- [Northern Australia and Rangelands Fire Extension Project](#)
- [Sandhill Dunnart Camera Trapping Surveys Underway](#)
- [Malleefowl Records in the Great Victoria Desert - Report](#)
- [Malleefowl Site Selection Project](#)
- [GVD Knowledge Hub](#)
- [Traditional and Contemporary Fire Patterns](#)
- [Threatened species workshops](#)
- Partnership

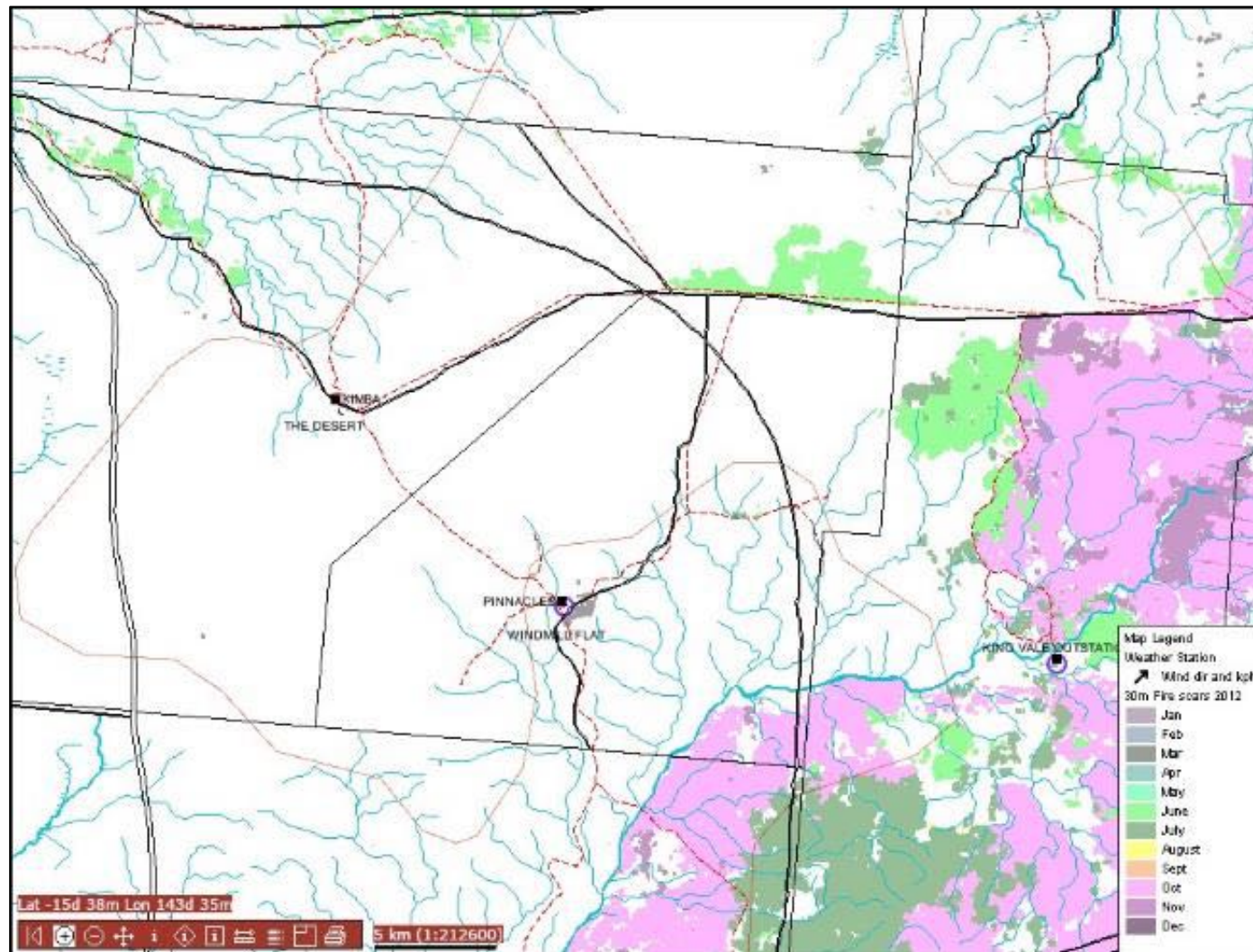




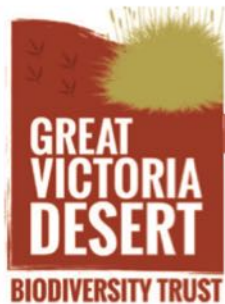
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# Fire Mapping



# Partnership



## Fire management

In August 2016 I was lucky enough to participate in a fire management activity in the Great Victoria Desert with the Spinifex Rangers and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.





# Conclusions – can we do nthis

- Landscape broader than 'environment'
- SEA constrained
- Traditional structure – e.g. NRM – caught in government policy
- GVD model still flawed – relies on offsetting MNES
- Partnerships
- Urban landscapes?