

# Pilbara Connections

## Spatial information mapped for Pilbara conservation assets

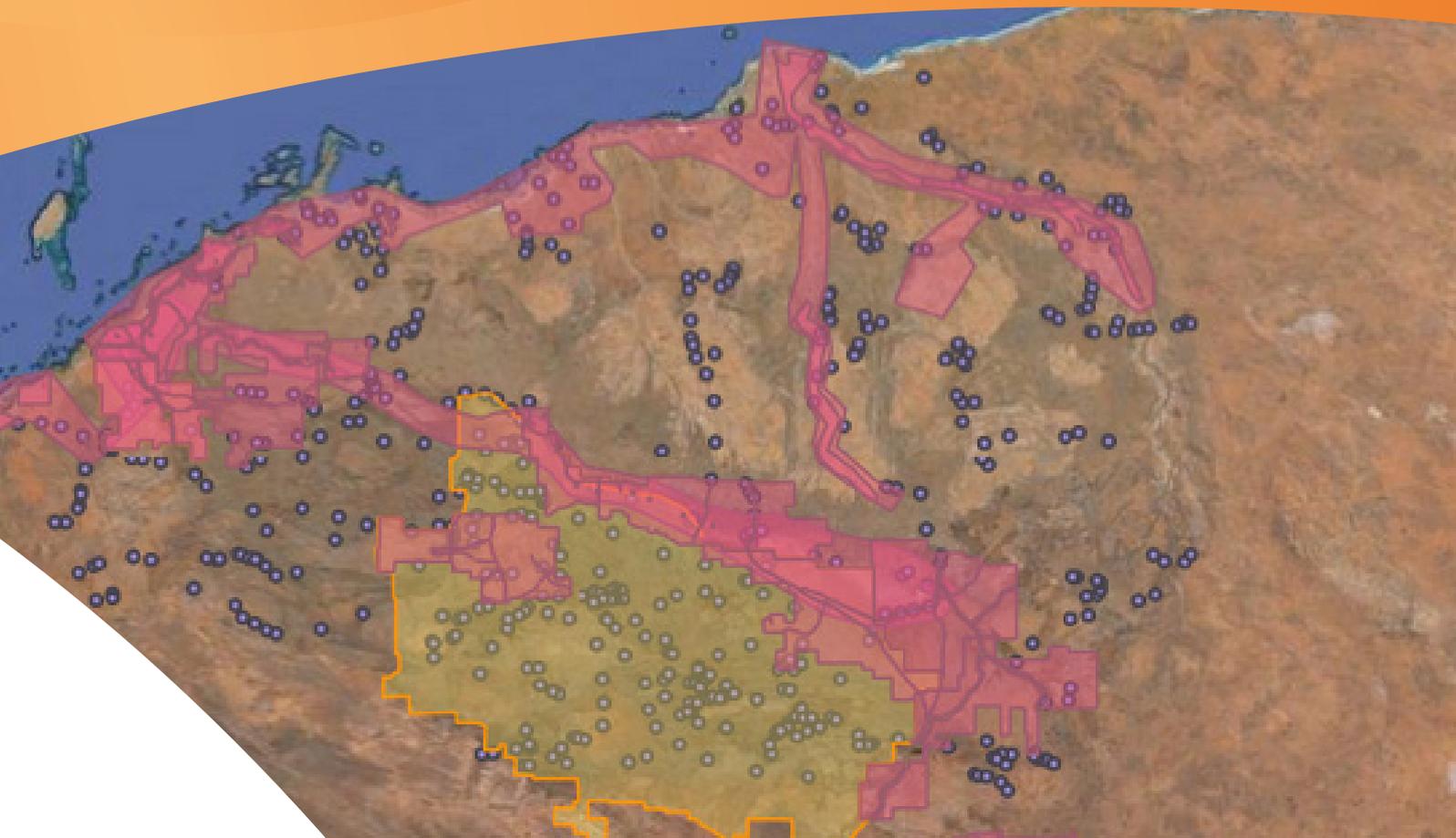
Consultancy Gaia Resources has been assisting the Pilbara Corridors Project with their series of Conservation Action Planning workshops.

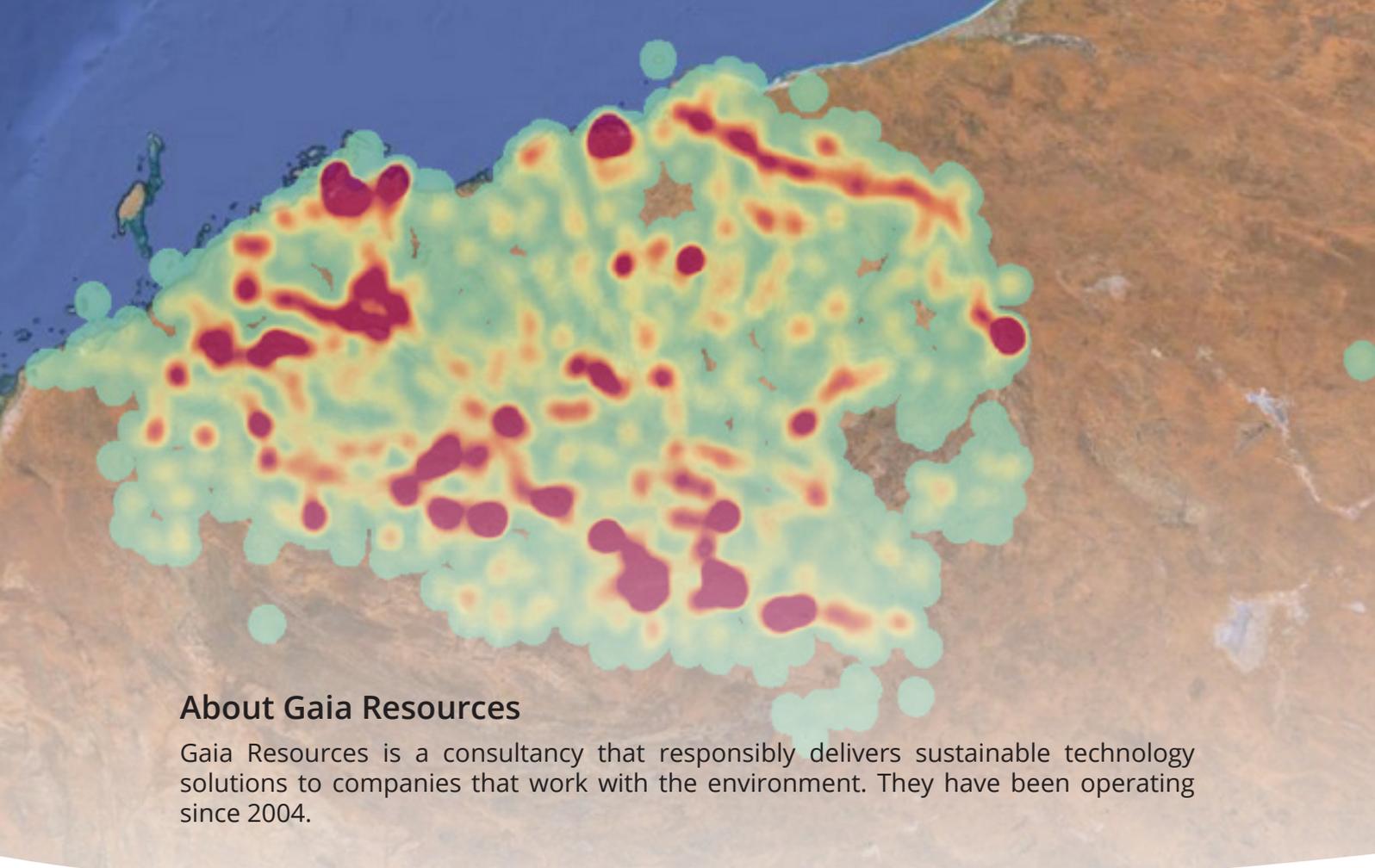
Director Piers Higgs said Gaia Resources' role at the workshop is very much about supporting the process in terms of spatial information.

The team at Gaia Resources has been working closely with Rangelands NRM to define boundaries for projects (such as research trials, surveys, offset programs and other sorts of projects) and documenting them in Rangelands NRM's GRID instance, an online mapping system designed for NRM groups (see more about GRID at <http://www.gaiaresources.com.au/products/grid/>)

"For the purposes of the Pilbara Corridors workshops, we began by compiling information about where projects are being done in the Pilbara," he said.

"This started with getting 'brain dumps' of what's going on in the Pilbara from a range of people, and then turning that into points and polygons on a map."





## About Gaia Resources

Gaia Resources is a consultancy that responsibly delivers sustainable technology solutions to companies that work with the environment. They have been operating since 2004.



**GAIA RESOURCES**

[www.gaiaresources.com.au](http://www.gaiaresources.com.au)

## ACCESS TO CONTRIBUTE DATA

Mr Higgs said being web based, GRID allows for anyone with access to be able to contribute data in the standardised format for that “Activity” (a term used to define a ‘thing that you do’ – like fencing, weed control, etc).

Once these features are saved into GRID, they then become immediately visible in the complementary public web map that is in the Pilbara Corridors web site. Any data in GRID, be it “Activity” or “base layer” data, can be exposed through this method to allow for use in public web sites.

“Together, GRID and the web map make a solid combination for public engagement, and a heatmap was also created that showed the density of projects in the Pilbara, which is a powerful way of visualising such complex data,” Mr Higgs said.

You can document your projects using the template that has been developed for this project, and we can then load this data directly into the GRID system. The template can be obtained from the Pilbara Corridors’ website as a compressed (ZIPped) file, containing an ESRI Shapefile with an associated spreadsheet explaining some of the values for the fields. Once filled out, please contact the Pilbara Corridors Program Manager, Ian Cotton to provide this data. Visit <http://pilbaracorridors.com.au/the-pilbara/knowledge-management/>



## About Piers Higgs

Piers is the Director of Gaia Resources, and has a background in spatial systems and ecology, and holds a BSc in Geography as well as an MBA. Piers has worked in and around the Pilbara in various roles over the last 15 years. Through Gaia Resources, Piers and his team provide spatial services to the Pilbara Corridors project.

## CAPTURING ASSETS IN THE PILBARA

The first workshop really aimed to capture information about the scope of the project, the types of assets to be considered and the vision for the Pilbara from the participants.

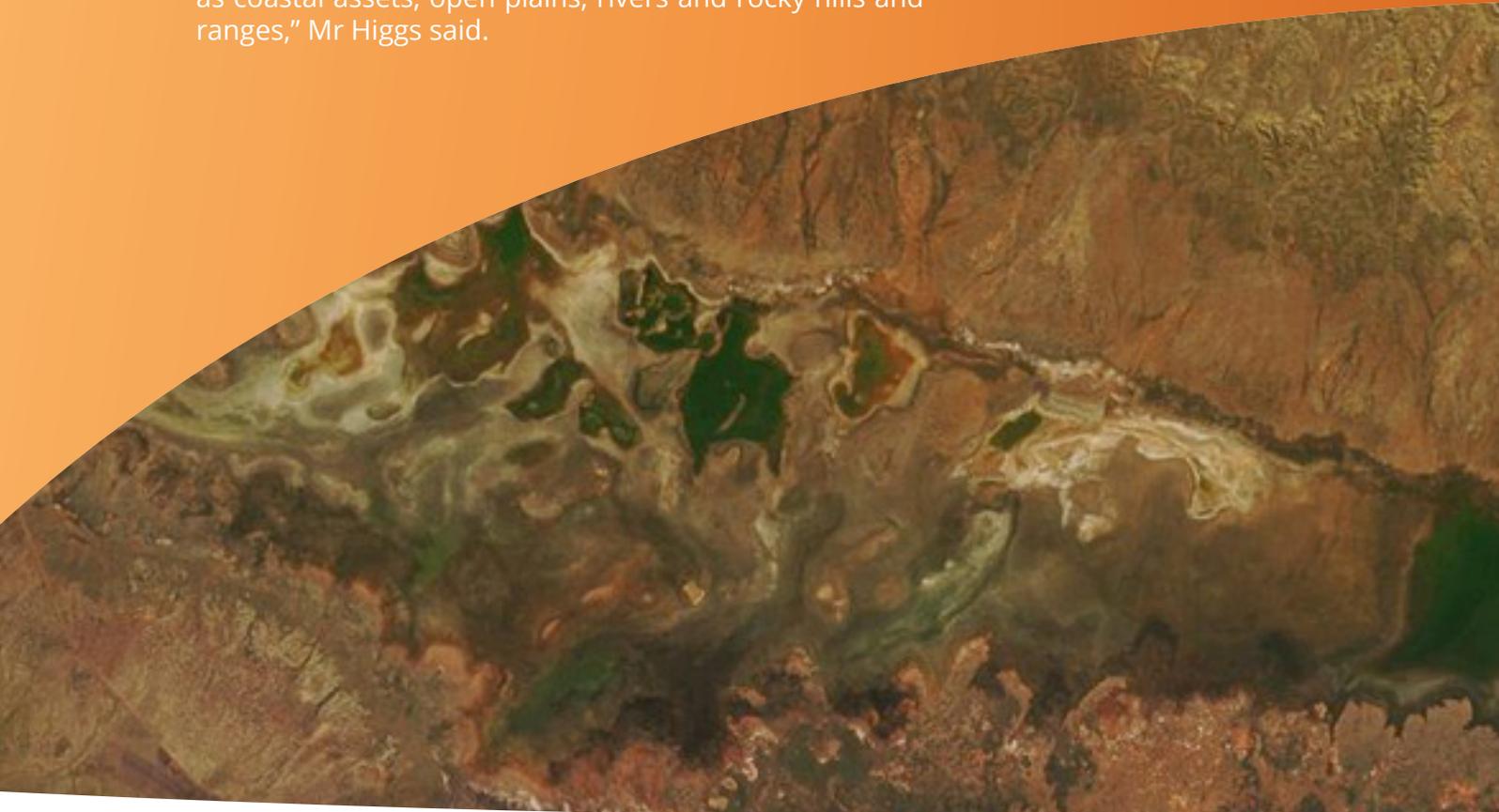
During the day Mr Higgs was able to use GRID to demonstrate where the “assets” were that people really wanted to see.

In some cases, a satellite imagery layer was used as a contextual layer for many of the discussions, just to illustrate where these assets lie in the landscape. Additionally, Local Government Areas, the IBRA Bioregion and hydrological catchments could be overlaid to look at how the Pilbara boundary could be defined.

“The first workshop captured a lot of these assets and concepts from the broad range of people involved – the next challenge was to start mapping and preparing this data for use in the second workshop,” Mr Higgs said.

The second workshop was where the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process really started to take shape as stakeholders came together to review the conservation assets identified in the first workshop, nominate the threats to these assets and to assess their condition.

“To prepare for the second workshop, we had put together the data from the first workshop, including setting up broad categories of the assets, such as coastal assets, open plains, rivers and rocky hills and ranges,” Mr Higgs said.



# REVIEWING CONSERVATION ASSETS

Next, the 13 categories, as well as the nested assets within them, had their condition and threats evaluated in a workshop environment.

The upcoming third workshop is where the work done at this second workshop will be digested and the project will then look at the strategic way forward for these assets.

“We will be determining conservation goals, strategies, key actions and monitoring.”

“It will be a very interesting conclusion to the workshop series!” Mr Higgs said.



[www.pilbaracorridors.com.au](http://www.pilbaracorridors.com.au)

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Pilbara Corridors is a coordinated approach to address biodiversity threats on a landscape scale in the Pilbara. It works at a landscape scale and across management boundaries by bringing together people and organisations with environmental expertise representing government, environment, community, mining, pastoralists and Indigenous groups to deliver effective land management.

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The Pilbara Corridors Project is funded by the Australian Government