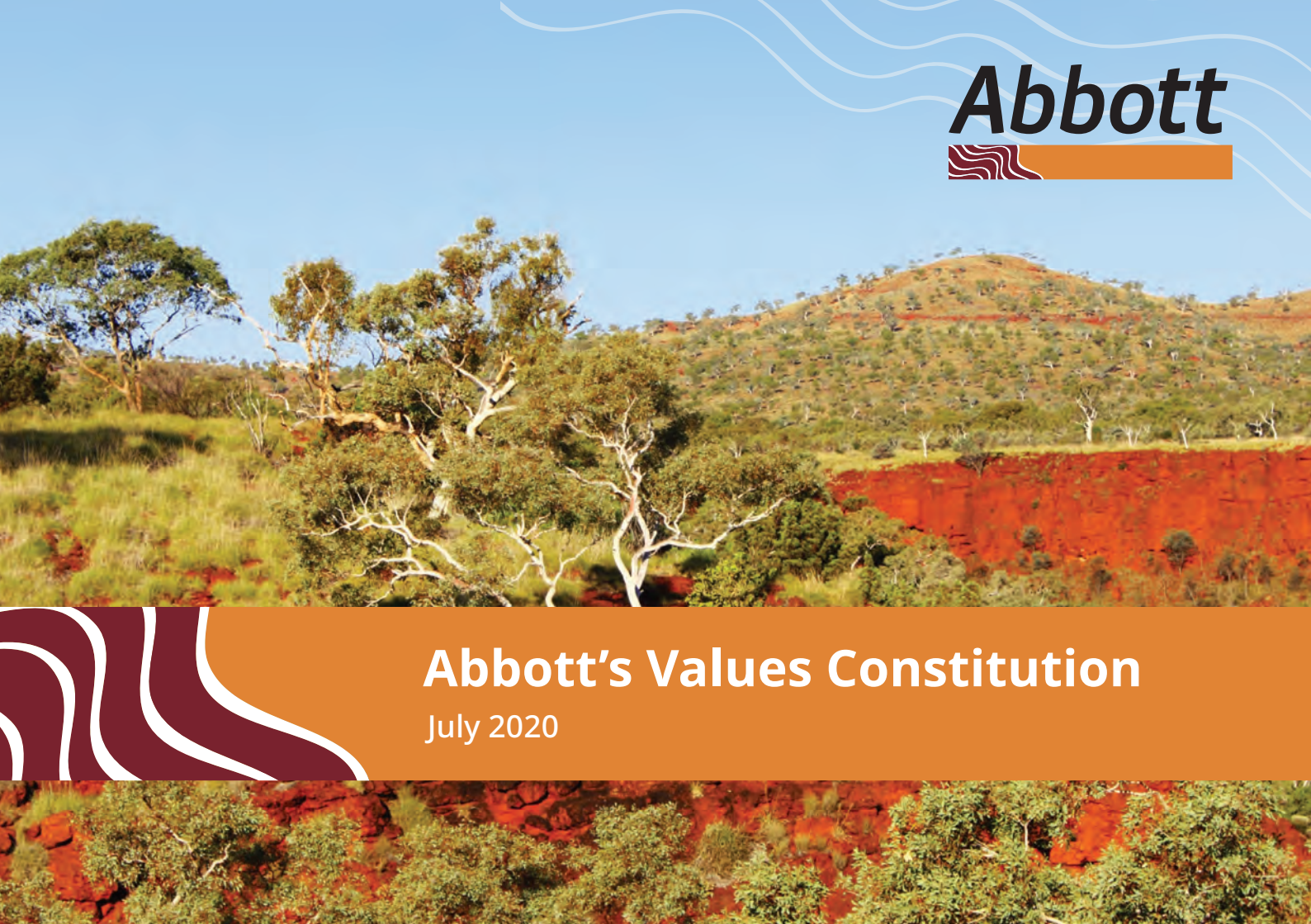




Abbott's Values Constitution

July 2020

Introduction by Re-Founder

Welcome to Abbott's Values Constitution which provides an insight into our purpose and values.

Our values are crucial to the way that we conduct ourselves and in turn these values are reflected in our business and the way we provide a service to our clients.

I have worked with Aboriginal people since the early 1990's because I was driven from within to do so. I chose this journey because it mattered to me.

This journey has provided me with incredible rewards having spent many hours in the company of Aboriginal people of all ages including Lore Men, Elders, the Elderly, younger men and women – all of whom have made my working life interesting and worthwhile.

I have a huge respect for Lore and Culture and understand the meaning of Country and how important it is to Aboriginal People.

Key to my success in this new journey is my ability to understand the need to listen very carefully to Aboriginal people and spend time with them so that I can understand and respond to what they want as opposed to assuming that I know the answer.

This was a very important realisation.

One of the outcomes of this realisation was that I came to the conclusion that you must never be in a hurry or need to go elsewhere when sitting down and chatting to Aboriginal people.

This journey of mine is reflected in our purpose and values.

If you would like to read more about my journey then you can read the Re-Founders Story at the back of this booklet.

Phil Drayson

July 2020



Our purpose

We acknowledge Aboriginal People's inherent right to culture, country and resources, and understand the need to listen, learn and work with them to improve their political, economic and social standing.



This purpose is fundamental to the operations of our business and is confirmed by our commitment to the following:

- We want to be part of a world where Aboriginal people are respected for the decisions that they make in determining their future.
- We acknowledge the importance of Mabo, Sorry to the Nation and the Uluru Statement from the Heart, as being incredibly important steps towards Aboriginal self-determination and recognition.
- We also acknowledge the importance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

These important events and milestones shape our approach to the way we do business and in doing so we want to be recognised:

- for the way we take the time to listen to and learn from Aboriginal People to inform the way we work;
- for understanding the importance of Country and Culture to Aboriginal People in everyday life; and
- for providing a transparent and fair service.



Our Values reflect how we interact with each other, how we take the time to listen to our clients and how we learn from them about how to provide a better service to them. Fundamental to our values is the recognition that Aboriginal People have the absolute right to Self Determination including the right to make decisions about their future.

Show Respect

Within the Abbott Team we believe showing respect to each other is crucially important to the way we do business. We believe by having a healthy respectful culture within then informs and reflects the way that we interact with our clients who have often had tough lives and who deserve the utmost respect as we try to assist them with issues in their lives.

Our clients are often lacking strong literacy skills, use English as a second language and get frustrated with the “White Mans’ system. This can be challenging for the Abbotts Team when communicating with clients.

Questions to ourselves:

- » *Have I taken time to listen to someone in our team who is having a hard time?*
- » *Did I listen, acknowledge and understand what my client was asking me?*
- » *Have I observed members of our Team displaying respect to difficult clients?*
- » *Am I challenged by angry clients and does that affect my approach to clients?*



Value Australia's First Peoples

Valuing the importance of our First Peoples is about acknowledging that as our original inhabitants they have very special attributes including a very old living culture, spirituality, immense knowledge of how to care for country, respect for family and the elderly and a special ability to create art and music as part of culture.

Acknowledging the special nature of our First Peoples is often a challenging concept for Non-Aboriginal Australians who often believe that Aboriginal people should assimilate with the broader Australian way of life and culture.

Not acknowledging and valuing the importance of our First Peoples inherent right to country and culture is contrary to the UN Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Questions to ourselves

- » *Am I aware of the history of injustices perpetrated against Aboriginal People?*
- » *Do I understand the impacts these injustices have had on generations of Aboriginal People and acknowledge these impacts?*
- » *Do we as a Team value our clients because they are Aboriginal People and therefore recognising them as Australia's First Peoples?*
- » *Do I support the improvement of Aboriginal lives including supporting the aspirations of the Black Lives Matter campaign?*
- » *Do I value the preservation of Aboriginal heritage and cultural sites some of which are thousands of years old?*

Take the Time

Respecting our clients includes taking the time to listen to them and learn from what they are saying so that we can provide a service which satisfies or meets their requirements. Aboriginal people are sick of Non Aboriginal people providing them with the answers to their problems. This is what governments past and of course what the missionaries of old did and it still happens today.

This is what the Uluru Statement From The Heart is all about. If accepted, it will enable Aboriginal People to have a body in Canberra which the Government is obliged to listen to because it will be enshrined in our constitution.

We have learnt that we should never hurry away from talking or meeting with our clients. We should never be in a hurry to catch a plane. Instead, we should stay the night if need be so that our clients have had the time they need to talk to us.

We also believe that as a Team and individually we should take the time to listen to each other and take the time to do so and provide support if need be.

Taking time for ourselves and looking after ourselves is also recognised as being an important value for our Team.

Questions to ourselves:

- » *Do I truly take the time to listen to a client properly and be sure of what they are asking?*
- » *Am I impatient with clients because they are not clear or easy to understand?*
- » *Do I show tolerance to our clients by taking the time to meet with them if they request to do so?*
- » *Do I take the time to listen and if need be help my colleagues?*
- » *Am I resting, exercising and eating properly?*



Be Courageous

Our work lives can be full of challenges with fellow colleagues, our employers and our clients all presenting us with difficult issues which can often require courageous responses.

It takes courage to be honest and at Abbott we do not expect anything less – we expect honesty and encourage asking questions of each other. All opinions are valued and considered.

We also expect our clients to be honest and to ensure that they ask what they want and we in return will be honest in answering them about whether we can meet that request or not. It takes courage to say no to someone who you know is disadvantaged and who may require assistance but whose request does not meet the requirements of the program on offer.

We expect our clients to be honest about their view on our performance.

We need to have the courage to tell a client that their behaviour is not appropriate if need be.

It takes courage to travel and meet with large numbers of clients away from our office.

It takes courage to face up to clients who may be angry due to a misunderstanding, resulting in the need to take the time to listen and when appropriate provide an honest and respectful response.

Questions to ourselves:

- » *Do I acknowledge that I have the courage to take the telephone calls, deal with difficult clients and assist them if possible?*
- » *Do I acknowledge that it is uncomfortable and does take courage to say no to a difficult client if need be?*
- » *Do I acknowledge that it takes courageous people to work at Abbotts?*
- » *Do we have the courage to question each other if we think it is important?*
- » *Do I acknowledge that it takes courage to meet our clients face to face, be respectful and at the same time honest?*

Re-Founders Story

In my life journey I have come to learn that a “Survivor” has immense empathy for humanity and the planet including its environment and for the Indigenous people of the world. It takes courage to speak out about these issues in everyday life.

For some strange reason I embarked on a professional life as a land surveyor for approximately 20 years. I challenged a lot along the way and in those days it wasn't easy to work out why I was where I was. I embarked on jobs away from WA including Europe, Hong Kong and the Gold Coast in Queensland making the most of my profession at the time.

When I was a young teenager I competed in cross country running and did my training in Bold Park a bushland close to Floreat where I grew up. When I returned from my travels while running through there a person running the opposite way yelled out to me what I was going to do about the developments that were planned to destroy this beautiful bush. The next day my ex-wife and I joined the Friends of Bold Park bushland and from there we stopped 3 major developments within the park. In that time I was elected to the Perth City Councillor representing the Wembley Ward standing on

a conservationist platform. I won easily which was a surprise at the time. The Bold Park campaign spanned 10 years of my life providing the opportunity to work with many committed and wonderful people.

My daughters grew up in a household committed to the Bold Park campaign, Bob Dylan music and many discussions about politics, human rights and a love for the beach and the bush. They hold these values today which is a proud thing for me. Even when my daughters lived away from me we always made time to go camping in the bush in our beloved Boronup Forrest in the South West of Western Australia which is close to the sensational Boronup Beach where we spent times on the beach and where I have surfed for over 40 years.

Eventually I ended up doing a post graduate diploma in Geography at UWA. I commenced a PhD and at the same time started to undertake regular counselling which I call a part of my self-development. It was while deciding on my research subject that it became apparent to me that I wanted to work with Aboriginal people and that the PhD must address this desire – contrary to the advice of others.



I cannot explain what drove me to want to spend time with Aboriginal people but I can say that I had an inner compulsion to do so.

Key to my success in this new journey was my ability to understand that I needed to listen very carefully to Aboriginal people and spend time with them so that I could understand and respond to what they wanted as opposed to our governments and of course the missionaries of the past. This was a very important realisation. One of the outcomes of this realisation was that I came to the conclusion that you must never be in a hurry or need to go elsewhere when sitting down and chatting to Aboriginal people.

The day after Richard Court was elected to government he announced that he intended to open a uranium mine at Rudall River National Park in the Pilbara – so I wrote to the late Rob Riley the CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) suggesting that he needed to fight this utilising geographic concepts including a Geographic Information System (GIS). Months later while sitting at my desk at UWA I got a tap on the shoulder from the Principal Legal Officer of the ALS and from that moment my life changed into having a meaning and purpose in life. I spent 6 years at the ALS pioneering the use of geographic concepts in native title evidence including GIS and it was successfully used in some of the early determinations in Australia.

When the ALS disbanded its Native Title Unit I decided to go into a recycling business reflecting my care for the environment. Unfortunately after about 18 months of trying this business failed and I lost everything. I have no regrets about this and look on it as one of life's learning experiences. I also think that I coped with the trauma of losing everything because I had suffered and was recovering from the trauma of being a "Survivor".

Eventually I was recruited to do a similar role to what I had done at the ALS at the Goldfields Land & Sea Council where I stayed for 11 years. This role progressed to a stage where I instigated land reform initiatives across the Goldfields Region of WA. This again pioneered a concept of utilising native title legislation with other legislation such as the Land Administration Act to achieve land reform for native title groups. I found this role incredibly rewarding spending a lot of time with fantastic Aboriginal field officers and Elders often going on field trips. I have a deep attraction to the bush and Aboriginal people and culture of the Goldfields of WA.

With the change of CEO at the GLSC I made the decision to leave and was eventually recruited by Abbotts to run the trust business. This has definitely been my most challenging job which combines a continued interaction with Aboriginal people and their culture (particularly the Pilbara) and being in a position to assist people financially. The crucial requirement for me personally and as the Delegated Trustee is to ensure that we meet with and consult as much as possible with our clients so that they are determining how their funds are to be used to enhance their lives. It means being prepared to travel regularly and attend meetings with our clients which can be challenging and rewarding at the same time.

In recent years I have spent many hours in the Pilbara and have a huge respect for the Aboriginal people, their Country and Culture of the Pilbara.

Trustee businesses are not necessarily respected by Aboriginal People and so I have worked hard to ensure that our clients realise that we do make every effort to provide a professional and transparent service. I believe that most of our clients respect our business and that this has partially come about because they respect me personally.

Abbott has been operating as a trustee for Native Title trusts since 2001 when it commenced a trustee role in Port Hedland, Western Australia. Since then it has grown and now offers its services Australia wide.

It has established an experienced team based in Perth which works closely with all of its trusts, regularly travelling to meet with the representatives of each group to ensure we provide a professional, transparent and fair service.

Since 2001 Abbott has provided other services to Aboriginal companies (ASIC) and corporations (ORIC) including administration, accounting and bookkeeping.

It also assists these entities to liaise and do business with mining companies, local government and state government agencies by providing logistical and facilitation services for meetings and heritage surveys.

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