



## THE TSWALU FOUNDATION

From Tswalu's earliest days, there has been a recognition that we can only care for and conserve what we can understand. Research has become a vital part of what we do at Tswalu and continues to reveal fascinating aspects of the ecology. Indigenous animal species have been successfully (re)introduced and are thriving.

### Research

The Tswalu Foundation (TF) was created as a result of the forward thinking and love of the Kalahari by Mr Jonathan Oppenheimer in 2008. His founding vision for the Foundation was to develop a platform on which local and international visitors could contribute and involve themselves in environmental research on Tswalu Kalahari – either to an existing project or to suggest and fund specific projects in areas of interest to the funder. The Kalahari system is a unique, vast and understudied area, thus this Foundation assists in developing research programs and protocols and therefore assists in the development of a better understanding of its unique fauna and flora in a direct, hands-on manner. The Foundation is fundamental in not only developing a greater appreciation for the beauty of the Kalahari and its abundant wildlife, but also provides encouragement and support to gain knowledge to better manage this unique part of Africa.

Tswalu Kalahari is driven by a strong conservation and community development ethic, and whilst the Oppenheimer family have sanctioned numerous projects, the Foundation affords more researchers to study in the southern Kalahari. Experience over the years has taught us that the longevity of the project is determined by the interactive nature of the project. We encourage researchers to share their concepts and progress with our guests – who, if inspired by the work, will continue to contribute to funding the project through the Foundation. Essentially, it becomes a self-funding campaign through guest contributions.

As well as being an incredible community of flora and fauna, Tswalu is also an extended human family of people from the Kalahari and beyond. We find strength in our diversity, and because we all share the same vision for the future of Tswalu, we can combine our energies and passion to make Tswalu's vision a reality.

The Tswalu community consists of our staff members and their families, researchers, visiting doctors that support the healthcare centre, visiting artists in residence, and each of our guests, alongside a wider community of neighbours, conservationists and everyone who cares about the restoration of the Kalahari.

### Tswalu Healthcare Centre

The Tswalu Healthcare Centre is a focal point for the community, providing vital medical services and health education to improve the quality of life for approximately 5000 people per year in the surrounding communities, and our own team members and their families. This project would not be possible without the vision and support from Dr Ludwig Foking who championed the development after a visit to Tswalu decades ago. It is also supported by the South African government and by generous donations.

### Tswalu School

The Tswalu school provides the ideal educational foundation for our staff members' children. More structured learning sessions are integrated with creative play and opportunities to explore their surroundings. Our Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes assist our team members, and their families, with literacy and gaining formal recognition for their skills and knowledge.

### Vegetable Garden

Rather than add to our carbon footprint transporting food over long distances, we are actively growing our own fresh produce, and continuing to investigate sustainable approaches to small-scale horticulture. Combining traditional techniques with modern, minimal water irrigation techniques has enabled us to reduce our food supply radius while providing our kitchens with new inspiration.

### Artist in Residence

A recent addition to the Tswalu Foundation, the Artist in Residence (AiR) program was initiated as a way to highlight local South African artists and their diversity of talent. Visiting artists are encouraged to gain inspiration for their work from the vast expanses of the Kalahari and its varied landscapes, culture, fauna and flora.



Artists are selected by a core team of Foundation members as well as key input from Mark Read of the Everard Read gallery. Selected artists will be able to put forward suggestions for future AiR candidates thereby growing the outreach potential of the program.

Once a body of art has been completed the artist has the opportunity of exhibiting their work at the prestigious Everard Read gallery in Johannesburg. This generates exposure for not only the artist concerned and the Tswalu Foundation, but also for the incredible depth of talent that South African artists can bring to the art world.

A key feature of the AiR program is that all proceeds generated from the sale of artwork produced while an artist is involved with the program go towards funding environmental research on Tswalu and as such close the loop between environment, skills development and community.