

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 5  
**Hearing:** Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Corporate  
**Program:** Science  
**Topic:** Promotion of the State of the Environment Report  
**Hansard Page:** 10  
**Question Date:** 22 May 2017  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Moore asked:**

Mr Thompson: The State of the Environment report is the most comprehensive assessment of Australia's environment across a number of domains. It is a report which is required under the EPBC Act to be tabled by the Australian government in the parliament every five years. The centrepiece action in terms of promoting it is really the minister's decision to table the State of the Environment report. Importantly this year it takes the form primarily of a digital platform rather than a physical paper report. There is a short overview which is available in paper form but it is the digital platform which is the tool that we are directing people to. Around the time when the minister tabled the report he wrote a piece—for the Guardian, I think—that was published at that time. The tool was made available on our website and also has its own dedicated website, as you would expect for a platform of that kind.

We have also been working and had done some prior spadework on with a number of organisations, including the Global Compact for business, to promote the State of the Environment platform. The lead author, Dr Bill Jackson, participated in a webinar relating to the State of the Environment and informing members of that compact of the main findings of the report. We are also rolling out a range of other communication tools and products, including through the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network, which is the philanthropy sector; the education sector, through teachers who teach environment and science; and a number of other quarters. We will provide briefings to senior officials of the jurisdictions of state and territory governments in the future as well.

Senator MOORE: Can we get a report on the program around that? It is a wide-ranging program you have set out, and this is into the future. It has come out in a different format this time, so there is a kind of threshold difference. Can we get some information from you in detail as it comes through rather than taking up too much time talking about it?

Mr Thompson: Yes, we are happy to do that.

**Answer:**

1. The Department of the Environment and Energy has been engaging stakeholders and building partnerships to develop targeted co-branded products that highlight the relevance and utility of State of the Environment (SoE) 2016 with four key target groups:
  - business
  - philanthropists/investors
  - education
  - environmental consultants.

The Department will continue to develop individual strategies for specific target audiences.

2. The Department has briefed, and will continue to brief, a range of agencies and committees including:
  - House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Energy
  - Productivity Commission
  - Murray-Darling Basin Commission
  - Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
  - Threatened Species Scientific Committee
  - Australian Heritage Council
  - Indigenous Advisory Committee
  - Department of Finance
  - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
  - Treasury Department
  - Attorney General's Department
  - Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
3. SoE authors are presenting at a range of events across Australia to promote their respective themes. These include industry/sector conferences and events:
  - Australian Coastal Councils Conference
  - National Trust
  - National Environmental Law Association
  - Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network
  - Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
  - Australian International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).
4. Evaluation workshops have been conducted with a cross section of industry, business and non-government organisations comprising National Australia Bank, ANZ Bank, IKEA, Humane Society International, Australian Committee for International Union for Conservation of Nature, Earthwatch, Environment Institute Australia & New Zealand, Ernst & Young, Landcare, The Wilderness Society, Westpac, Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand, Bush Heritage. These workshops aim to reveal what elements are of most use to particular audiences, so as to better target resources to those audiences.