

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 6
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Corporate
Program: Science
Topic: State of the Environment Report
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Senator Moore asked:

Senator MOORE: —are there staff permanently allocated to the issues around the State of the Environment report? At the time of the creation, of course—but in that five-year in-between period is there ongoing work within the department on reviewing it, evaluating it and working on how it should best work? Is there a team that does that?

Mr Thompson: Clearly, as you say, there is a largish team under a director who is responsible for preparing the State of the Environment report and supporting the independent lead authors. That is a sort of surge activity over 2½ or three years. That surge has now come off but we still have a State of the Environment team under a director. Their role now is really to undertake some of the communications activities that we have identified to promote the digital platform within the department, across the Commonwealth and more broadly, and also to continue to explore how we can keep the State of the Environment as a more current report using the digital platform. They are working now on that range of issues. I could not tell you how big that team is. It would be in the order of four or five people.

Senator MOORE: Can you take that on notice?

Mr Thompson: I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

There are five full-time equivalent staff currently assigned to the State of the Environment (SoE) team. Current priority work for the team is to:

- Build awareness of SoE 2016 through public presentations and social media, and develop products to communicate key findings and demonstrate how users can interrogate the new Digital SoE platform.
- Work with stakeholders including from the states, business, education and NGOs to evaluate SoE 2016 and develop a forward plan for a SoE product that best meets users' needs.
- Develop a data management plan for the next SoE report that aligns with the Australian Government's open data policy and data integration initiatives.
- Maintain and improve the Digital SoE platform.