

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

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 06  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Program:** Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)  
**Topic:** Threatened Species Projects  
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**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Chisholm, Anthony asked:**

Senator CHISHOLM: Senator Moore mentioned the mountain bike wash station and a heritage conservation project, what sort of criteria are used to assess those projects? Does it have to have a one per cent benefit to threatened species or 50 per cent benefit? How are they assessed, from a departmental point of view?

Mr Andrews: I will let Mr Dadswell answer that question, because his team do the Green Only assessment. Each program has different guidelines and rules for assessment.

Mr Dadswell: The Green Army program comprises \$362.8 million over four years from 2016-17. That provides for around 500 projects per year.

Senator CHISHOLM: What is that specifically for?

Mr Dadswell: For Green Army projects. That provides for up to 500 projects per year. Each year the government will call for applications from organisations—these could be land care groups, natural resource management organisations or local government—to submit a project for a Green Army team to come and work on a project for between 20 and 26 weeks.

Applications are sought and the criteria are primarily against matters of national environmental significance. So, will a project address and assist with recovery of threatened species? Will it address matters of national and international heritage? Will it improve the state of a Ramsar wetland, for example? Those are the bases upon which projects are supported. When proponents put forward a project they are asked to provide evidence that the stated activities of the Green Army team will contribute to the recovery of or improvement of, for instance, a threatened species outcome. In doing so they would be pointing to things such as a recovery plan, a local management plan that would outline the local condition of that species and the activities to be undertaken. We assess projects competitively, so only those projects that can show and demonstrate that there would be a significant outcome for a threatened species for a local project would be ranked higher than those that are less so and would then be recommended for funding.

Senator CHISHOLM: When you say 'significant', it is all based on a judgement rather than a percentage figure or anything like that, in terms of the impact it will have?

Mr Dadswell: We have an assessment methodology and it is comparative, so we look for the stronger projects and projects that do have a strong alignment with those threatened species outcomes. I should add that to date 1,145 Green Army projects have been announced across rounds 1 to 4. To date, 891 of those projects either have been completed or are currently in progress. Some 642 of those projects are contributing to threatened species outcomes. We can take it on notice, but the projects that were referenced by Senator Moore may not be the ones that we are suggesting contribute to threatened species primarily.

**Answer:**

These projects were assessed based on information provided by the applicants, and accepted as supporting threatened species outcomes. The Green Army project "*Heritage garden, building, ship conservation\_Melbourne conservation and management*" is improving habitat through weed control and promoting greater conservation awareness of native vegetation. The Green Army project '*Limiting mountain bike weed dispersal into vulnerable bushland*' is improving habitat through weed control and also reducing invasive weed dispersal by mountain bikes, raising awareness of weed impacts and educating mountain bikers on methods of reducing weed spread to improve outcomes for threatened plants and animals.