TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Our ref: DOC/22/83050
Officer: John Ramsay
Phone: 61656822
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11 August 2022

Mr Joshua Paveley
Environmental Defenders Office
131 Macquarie Street
HOBART TAS 7000
Email: Joshua.paveley@edo.org.au

Dear Mr Paveley

RIGHT TO INFORMATION REQUEST REGARDING TASMANIA'S STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT

I refer to your applications for Right to Information from 27 June 2022 and 13 July 2022 regarding information relating to the status of the State of Environment Report and budget information from 2006-2009.

I have caused a search of the available Tasmanian Planning Commission records to be undertaken in relation to both requests.

I note that the request of 13 July 2022 repeats the request of 27 June 2022, but seeks further information on costs from 2006-2009, associated with the production of the 2009 State of the Environment Report. The availability of records for that period has proved to be a challenge, but from the records that have been able to be accessed in relation to that request the following information has been compiled -

Recorded Expenses	**2006-2009**
Salaries	873,292.00
Software & Licenses	24.978.00
Grants	$3,000.00
Consultants	2250.00
Recorded Misc Expenses	714.77
	$904,234.77

TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

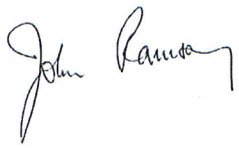
Likely expenditure, but not able to be sourced, are the cost for superannuation, travel, Delegate panel expenses, administrative and operating costs and costs of inputs from other agencies.

In addition 3 budget reports from 2006 and 2007 have been able to be sourced and are enclosed with this letter.

All the relevant information that has been able to be sourced in relation to the 27 June request has already been released and is published on the Commission website at https://www.planning.tas.gov.au/.

The information contained in this letter and the attached documents will be similarly published.

Yours sincerely



JOHN A RAMSAY
Executive Commissioner

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Agenda Item No: 8.1.1.

REPORT TO RESOURCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Date	**2 July 2007**
Subject:	**State of the Environment Report**
File:	**SoE Admin**

Background

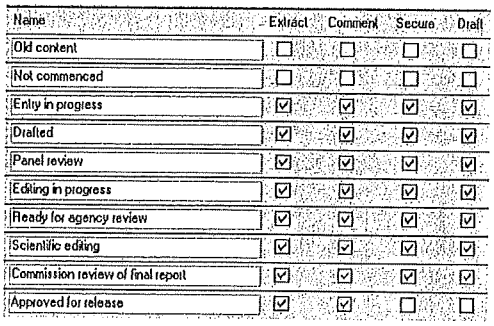
The SoE Panel at its last meeting on 18 June, asked that a report be prepared to the Commission detailing progress with the 2008 State of the Environment (SoE) Report. The previous report to the Commission, dated November 2006, outlined the implications of current resourcing relative to the project 'task' (copy attached).

As noted in past reports to the Commission, key parts of the SoE Report have been simplified and the overall number of 'Issues' and 'Indicators' has been reduced. Case studies are not included in the 2008 Report and the more complex working group advisory processes from the previous report processes have been avoided. A number of information technology tools have been implemented to improve documentation and project management, and to simplify the transfer of information to the web.

Work on environmental and natural resource indicators is a key focus of the SoE Unit's current activities. The indicators are a key component of the SoE Report as they respond most directly to the statutory requirement to report on conditions, trends and changes. They are a key source of information for issue reports and recommendations. The project schedule allows about 10 person days for an indicator to be prepared. Key tasks typically involve the following: negotiate and arrange access to data; assess data coverage, limitations and availability; process data and prepare mapped, graphical and tabular outputs; analyse data and provide interpretation; mark-up the content for web publication; and arrange for a third party review and respond as appropriate.

By June 2007, nine indicators have been completed to 'Panel Review' stage (see table below for stage descriptions). An additional 18 indicators have reached the 'drafted' stage or are awaiting comments from third party reviewers. A further 18 indicators are at the 'entry in progress' stage, while 32 indicators have not commenced. Once an assessment of the available data is undertaken, an indicator may no longer warrant inclusion. On some occasions, a new indicator may be included if data become available. An adaptive approach within project resource limitations is required to make the most of available information.

Stages in the SOE Content Management System



Once a minimum set of indicators is compiled, work commences on the integrating 'Issue Report'. For example, the Issue Report on Water Quantity has been completed and contains indicators on Streamflow, Environmental Flow Provisions, Water Consumption and Abstraction, Sustainable Yield, and Natural Inflows to Hydro Storages. Issue report summaries and chapter summaries then follow. The project schedule allows a further 8 person days for the preparation of the 'Issue Report' and summary.

By the current stage of the project, work should have moved beyond the present focus on the Water and Atmosphere chapters. Together these chapters contain 35 indicators. It is estimated that at least two months remain before these chapters can be completed to a satisfactory standard (this is subject to satisfactory reviews of drafted content by third party reviewers and the SoE Panel). Work would then proceed on the remaining chapters: Land; Biodiversity; Coastal, Estuarine and Marine; and Settlements.

Based on the calculations in the following table, it is estimated that three chapters will be completed by the end of 2007. This assumes staff availability of 2.5 (based on half of the GIS Project Officer's time allocated to drafting content). This is an estimate as the actual number of issues and indicators will vary as will the preparation time. Preparation time is also subject to the availability of staff from agencies for the provision of data and comments. The SoE Unit is subject to the protocols that have been established with DTAE and DPIW in relation to contact with staff.

Table: Estimated person day requirements by chapter

	Issues	Indicators
Estimated number per chapter	8	16
Estimated person days to complete one	8	10
Total person days	64	160

Options for responding to project delays

1. Additional resourcing

A position description for a fixed term position to assist with drafting indicators has been prepared. Due to overall reductions in the Commission's budget allocation, it appears unlikely that funding would be available in the 2007/08 financial year. There are diminishing returns for a position appointed beyond June 2008. There is little likelihood of Commission staff being diverted from other responsibilities.

Absence of additional project funding also presents project risks (see previous report to the Commission) and limits options for the completion of the Report, such as in relation to printing and web production issues that may arise.

2. Further simplify process and structure

The SoE Panel has examined options regarding the grouping or removal of selected issues from the report structure and the overall number of 'Issue Reports' has been reduced. A preliminary issue level structure has been agreed by the SoE Panel. Options to group or combine parts of the report will continue to be identified. However, combing content to a higher level has the potential to add to complexity, and hinder the drafting process without adding to the readability of the final SoE Report. Removal of Issues Reports has been undertaken where there is insufficient data to prepare an update. In these cases, the Panel has asked that problems of data availability be highlighted up front in the chapter introduction. The overall number of indicators proposed for SoE 2008 is currently about 70, which is approximately half of the number contained in SoE 2003.

3. Chapter level rationalisation

The removal of a chapter was not previously considered as an option. However, project slippage suggests that this is increasingly an appropriate response. The justification for excluding a chapter would need to be clearly explained in the introduction to the SoE Report. The Cultural Heritage chapter may be excluded on the basis that the legislation is currently being amended and the Tasmanian Heritage register is being upgraded. Information to describe the condition of historic heritage is absent or fragmented. However, cultural heritage practitioners and Heritage Tasmania would argue that it is unfairly targeting cultural heritage. This may be a stakeholder issue that needs to be managed.

The 'Towards Sustainability' chapter is a potentially valuable opportunity to present some overall conclusions and link common themes across the report. At this stage, it is also flagged for removal. Removal of the Cultural Heritage and Towards Sustainability chapters would require some minor additional cost in re-working the graphics on the home page to remove links to these chapters.

4. Delayed release or staged release

The completion of the report in entirety could be delayed up until April 2009, which coincides with 5 years from the date of tabling in Parliament of the previous report. A further option is for a staged release: finalise and release chapters and indicators by December 2008 (conditions, trends and changes) with recommendations to be released by April 2009.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Commission note that:

- Further rationalisation of the scope of the SoE Report will be required and that this is likely to include removal of the Cultural Heritage and Towards Sustainability chapters.
- Release of the SoE Report may be delayed up until April 2009, which coincides with 5 years from the date of tabling of the previous SoE Report.

Officer: Stephen Waight

Title: Senior Project Officer

Date: 28 June 2007

Agenda Item No:

REPORT TO RESOURCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Date	**13 November 2006**
Subject:	**State of the Environment Report**
File:	**SoE Admin**

Background

At its last meeting, the Panel requested that a report be prepared to the Commission detailing the implications of the present level of resourcing for the SoE Report. By way of background, the SoE Unit has three staff comprising the Senior Project Officer (Administrative and Clerical Level 8), Project Officer (Professional Officer Level 1), and GIS Officer (Professional Officer Level 1). The GIS Officer also provides geographic information systems and data support for Commission functions other than SoE.

Current budgetary constraints have resulted in fewer available resources for the report. In particular, funding is not available to appoint fixed term positions or engage consultants to address specific parts of the report (see Attachment 1). While Commission staff are able to work within the budget allocated to meet the requirements of the State Policies and Projects Act 1993 s.29, budget constraints will necessitate rationalisation of the scope of the report in a number of ways. Budget constraints also present additional project risks. Rationalising the report and managing project risks will need to occur while ensuring that Commission and community expectations for the report are met in a timely manner.

Other than some grouping and amalgamation as outlined below, it will not be acceptable for a comprehensive report of this type to leave out any significant environmental issues. At the same time, it will be important to avoid cursory assessments of an issue or indicator.

Resource constraints are also occurring in the context of the implementation of the agency restructure, which has had implications particularly in relation to funding and time required to negotiate formal data licence agreements previously provided free of charge from within DPIW. The agency restructure has also altered the information technology context for the SoE Unit with SoE web sites (2003 and draft 2008 in preparation) continuing to be served by DPIW at a reduced level of support (maintenance only).

As requested by the Panel, the responses to date to these circumstances and implications for the SoE Report are discussed.

Discussion

The State of the Environment Report is prepared using the structure outlined in Table 1. An appreciation of this structure may assist in understanding the implications of proposals for scaling back the report. In particular, reducing the number of issues will

reduce the requirement for indicators, and potentially reduce the requirement to advance recommendations that respond to a particular issue.

Table 1: SoE Heading Hierarchy

	Chapter (e.g. atmosphere)	
	Topic (e.g. ambient air quality)	
Indicators linked to Issues (e.g. concentration of particulates)	Issue (e.g. particulates)	Issues linked to Recommendations (e.g. reducing population exposure to particles)

Responses to budget and resource constraints to date

Simplification of process and structure

Steps taken to simplify the reporting process have included removing case studies, simplifying the issue-level structure (Table 2), and avoiding more complex administrative arrangements, particularly the use of theme based Advisory Groups. The Panel has further determined that a public consultation or public hearing process will not be held for the SoE Report, which will allow a further saving of time and resources.

The revised issue level structure shown in removes any heading not required specifically under the legislation. 'Background' is necessary to explain why the issue is contained in the report while 'Assessing and measuring the current situation' and 'Indicators' respond to the legislative requirement to report on conditions, and trends and changes in the environment. 'What has been achieved' corresponds to the requirement to report on the achievement of resource management objectives as well as providing necessary context for any recommendations, which are also required under the legislation. 'Related issues' links to related content. The issue summary page has also been simplified.

Table 2: Revised simplified issue-level structure template for 2008

2003 Issue level structure	2008 Issue level structure
Background	Background
Implications	Assessing and measuring the current situation
Regional aspects	Indicators
Assessing and measuring the current situation	What has been achieved (management responses)
Indicators	Recommendations
Management responses	Related issues
Future directions	
Recommendations	
Related issues	

Additional project management information

The Panel requested information on the strategy to ensure timely agency review and input. This process is focussed currently on dialogue with agencies (Tasmanian and some Commonwealth such as the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO) to secure access to information and to ensure that custodians of data are aware of how their data is being used in the report. Formal and informal requests for information and content reviews are a key part of the process.

The Panel also asked for more detailed project management information to understand the critical path and areas of risk for meeting timelines. In response, reports detailing project timelines and person day allocations to issues and indicators have been prepared. These reports will be the subject of ongoing review by the Panel.

Chapter level rationalisation

The removal of a chapter has not been considered as an option at this stage. Removing a chapter has implications for continuity relative to previously published reports. Each chapter is scheduled and staff time allocated according to the availability of key information (e.g. with its reliance on census data, the settlements chapter will be compiled later in 2007). Currently, most effort is being directed towards finalising the Inland Waters and Wetlands and Atmosphere Chapters. Within the project management schedule (see attached report to the Commission), these chapters need to be substantially completed before the end of this year to an issue and indicator stage to avoid compromising the preparation of remaining chapters and recommendations.

Grouping or removal of issues

On the basis that there were insufficient resources or data for retaining some issues in the 2008 Report, the Panel examined a number of options regarding the grouping or removal of selected issues from the report structure. A preliminary issue level structure has been agreed.

Higher-level grouping of issues involves combining different aspects of environmental condition or processes and agents of change (e.g. assess threatening processes at a higher level such as 'habitat change' in the Biodiversity Chapter rather than the individual components of habitat change such as land clearance as undertaken for SoE 2003).

Removal of issues has been undertaken where there is insufficient data to prepare an update. An example is indoor air quality. In these cases, the Panel has asked that problems of data availability be highlighted up front in the chapter introduction.

Removal of issues has also been undertaken where it is considered that the matter is more fully and appropriately dealt with by other government processes. For example, some socio-economic issues were included as part of the Settlements Chapter in the previous SoE Report on the basis that it is a factor in the 'liveability' of settlements. The Panel has endorsed the removal of this issue from the chapter on the basis that it is more appropriately dealt with through the Tasmania Together process.

The scope of the cultural heritage chapter will need to be significantly reduced and options for achieving this will need to be discussed with the relevant State Agencies and the Tasmanian Heritage Council. Options include reducing the scope of the issues covered to built heritage and cultural landscapes.

The Coastal, Estuarine and Marine chapter is currently unresourced as this was previously completed largely through consultancies undertaken by the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute supported by a separate water quality contract. Limited access to water quality data will allow some compilation of these sections in the chapter.

Currently, there are 64 issues proposed for SoE 2008 in comparison with 75 in SoE 2003. In addition to the 75 issues in the previous report, the 'Towards Sustainability' chapter contained further separate reports.

Rationalising the number of indicators

Indicators are recognised as a key part of the report as they respond most closely to the legislative requirement to identify trends and changes in the environment. A number of indicators are able to be removed because restructuring at the issue level influences the number of indicators required. Indicators may also be removed where there is insufficient data collected (funding may have since ceased for that monitoring program, which is beyond the control of the Commission).

At this stage, the number of indicators listed for inclusion in the draft 2008 report in preparation is about a quarter of those included in the 2003 Report (50 indicators proposed for 2008, 197 included in SoE 2003). Currently, it is not clear that 50 indicators can be supported within available resources. An overall reduction in the number of indicators may be acceptable provided the reasons are stated in the introduction to the report.

Project risks

While the actions detailed above assist in managing the additional project risk arising from resource constraints, a number of risks remain. Areas of risk include key data not being available when scheduled, failure to complete chapters within the allocated time, unfavourable reviews requiring additional work, or delays in agency responses to requests for information.

The process to prepare the report requires an initial period of inquiry and research by Commission staff to establish what will be possible to achieve at a chapter, issue and indicator level. Even if there were additional resources available for the report it is only useful to provide funding for an issue or indicator where there is reasonable prospect of new information being available.

At the conclusion of the period allocated to each chapter in the project schedule, an assessment will be needed as to whether the chapters in their entirety are sufficiently comprehensive. Action will be required to address any shortcomings. A budget for the report provides options in responding to scope or quality concerns once this initial period of inquiry and research has been completed.

In the Inland Waters and Wetlands chapter, issue reports that would benefit from consulting or fixed-term support include Wetlands, Riparian Vegetation and Land Use Activities. The Atmosphere Chapter is substantially complete and would probably not benefit from additional resources at this stage. Parts of the report of particular concern are those characterised by limited direct access to data sources and limited background or expertise in the Unit. The Cultural Heritage and Coastal, Estuarine and Marine are particular examples.

Additional project risk will also arise through insufficient funding for:

- purchase of data (e.g. some remote sensing data)
- scientific editing
- specific reviews of parts of the report by external consultants
- addressing specific parts of the report where there is limited background in the SoE Unit.

Action required

Relatively small budget allocations are able to make a significant contribution through the benefit of applying outside expertise and through freeing up Commission staff time to be directed towards other parts of the report (and to project management tasks). A budget allocation in the 2007-08 financial year would still provide some benefit for the report, such as in allowing scientific editing of parts of the report. In addition to seeking a budget allocation, the following actions are also required:

- Letters to agencies outlining the situation and highlighting where agency contributions are specifically needed.
- Letters to agencies where data has been requested and this has yet to be supplied.
- Regular production of progress reports by Commission staff and Panel reviews of progress against targets.
- Revisiting the report scope, structure and indicators if project slippage occurs.
- Should the opportunity arise, investigate availability of other Commission staff on a short-term basis (currently, this is viewed as highly unlikely).

Officer: Stephen Waight

Title: Senior Project Officer

Date: 9 November 2006

Attachment 1

Key fixed term appointments and short term consultancies (SoE 2003)

Position	Purpose	Status for SoE 2008
Short term consultancy water quality indicators	Compile data from water quality databases and present as indicators	Not required as direct links to water quality and quantity databases secured and methodology now defined. Reviews of the analysis are required.
Short-term consultancy, vegetation change and land cover classification	Prepare vegetation change assessment and land cover classification.	Not required as the TASVEG program is now preparing these outputs and the SoE will incorporate these (subject to timing of release). Work still required to process and analyse data.
Consultancy to develop SoE reporting system	Develop the SoE System for on-line reporting.	Occasional update and maintenance required only improving functionality.
Fixed-term appointment, web support	Support data entry to the SoE System	Not required. This position assisted with data entry for the report. The work is done effectively within the Unit as part of work processes.
Fixed-term appointment, Land and Biodiversity Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Land and Biodiversity	Necessary but currently not funded.
Fixed-term appointment, Cultural Heritage Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Cultural Heritage	Necessary but currently not funded.
Fixed-term appointment, Settlements Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Settlements	Necessary but currently not funded.
Short term consultancy, Coastal, Estuarine and Marine Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Coastal, Estuarine and Marine	Necessary but currently not funded.
Short term consultancy, land use and inland waters	Compile the land cover and inland waters issue report in the Inland Waters and Wetlands chapter	Avoidable depending on overall work load on staff
Editorial support and independent review	Several consultancies to edit the report for readability and style.	Necessary but currently not funded.

Resource Planning and Development Commission

Memo

Location: 3rd Floor, 144 Macquarie Street HOBART Tasmania
Mail: GPO Box 1691 Hobart Tasmania 7001
Phone: (03) 6233 2795
Fax: (03) 6233 5400
Email: enquiry@rpdc.tas.gov.au

To: Simon Cooper, Executive Commissioner

From: Stephen Waight, Senior Project Officer, State of the Environment

Date: 22 February 2007

Re: Budget proposals for State of the Environment 2008

Dear Simon,

As discussed in our meeting yesterday, attached is a budget prepared last year for the period 2006-08 for the Third State of the Environment Report. I have amended it since we met yesterday as funding is not available for the major expenditure items proposed in the current financial year. I haven't amended the timing of the indicators position but it is clearly less likely at this stage that funds would be available in the current financial year.

Also attached is a background paper prepared for the Commission in August last year detailing some of the changes made to the report preparation process and the scope of the report in response to budget constraints. Other changes have been made since the Panel was convened late last year. For example, the Panel determined that a public consultation program on recommendations would not be conducted. This will provide further savings of time and resources.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information to support the case. Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Stephen Waight

Budget State of the Environment Report Tasmania 2007–08, RPDC, updated 22/2/07

	84007				SOE Report
	84007		60	2311	Salaries
	84007		60	2354	Meeting
	84007		60	2331	Sittings fees
	84007		60	2371	Parking
	84007		60	2372	Interstate Travel
	84007		60	2373	Intrastate Travel
	84007		60	2531	Printing & Publications
	84007		60	2541	Advertising/Promotion & Marketing
	84007		60	2551	Consultants
		costcode	2006-07	2007-08	comments
research	ABS census data 2006	2531	nil	2,500	
	~~satellite data purchase~~	~~2531~~	~~15,000~~	~~15,000~~	Proposal withdrawn 22/2/07
	other data purchases (e.g. building approvals)	2531	3,000	3,000	
software maintenance	ArcView and Spatial Analyst	2531	2,560	2,560	
	other software upgrades	2531	2,500	2,500	
publications	hard copy publication	2531	nil	5,500	print small volume of summary and recommendations only
	CD ROM publication	2531	nil	nil	
	SoE system database maintenance	2531	4,500	4,500	
	graphic design templates	2531	~~5,500~~	~~3,500~~	Proposal withdrawn 22/2/07
	advertising	2531		1,500	public notices for publication of draft and final reports
consultancies	indicators position (12 months)	2311	~~35,396~~	35,396	From December 2006 to December 2007, calculations below
and salaries	shorter term consultancies	2551	~~50,000~~	50,000	Consultancies for 2006/07 withdrawn 22/2/07
	scientific editing and review	2551	~~25,000~~	30,000	Scientific editing for 2006/07 withdrawn 22/2/07
sitting fees		2331	20,000	20,000	
travel	intrastate travel	2373	500	500	may increase depending on publication of a draft report
	interstate travel	2372	2,500	2,500	allow for 1 interstate conferences or meetings pa
	Total		~~166,456~~	~~178,956~~	
			70,956	160,456	

calculations		
indicators position		
Salary costs		59,262
on-costs		
salary (professional level 1, band 6)	0.08	64,003
super	0.062	67,971
payroll costs	0.011	68,719
workers compensation	0.035	70,793
telephone		

Agenda Item No:

REPORT TO RESOURCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Date	**28 August 2006**
Subject:	**Third State of the Environment Report (SoE 2008)**
File:	**SoE Admin**

Background

Preparation of a five yearly State of the Environment (SoE) Report is a legislative responsibility for the Commission under s. 29 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*. The second SoE Report was completed in December 2003 and tabled in March 2004. A review of the second report was completed in April 2004. The approach to the Third SoE Report (SoE 2008) is drawn in part from this review as well as recent information on the budget available to complete the third report.

Budget

Current budgetary constraints have resulted in the availability of fewer resources which will reduce the report's scope and potentially limit capacity to research and respond to Commission requests. Commission and community expectations for the report will need to be achieved with fewer resources and diminishing capacity within State Government to provide contributions to the report (particularly in circumstances where NRM monitoring and evaluation is requiring a greater contribution by State Government). Additional funding would enable the appointment of consultants as required to fill major content gaps or to provide editing or external reviews.

Opportunities have been identified to reduce the scope of the report without detracting from the key statutory requirement to identify conditions, trends and changes and provide recommendations. These were highlighted in the presentation to the Commission in May, and include:

- Minor changes in the report structure are proposed to improve simplicity, readability and to reinforce the requirements of the legislation.
- Less emphasis on description of the issues and background (as readers can be linked to SoE 2003 on the web for more background information). There will be greater emphasis on assessing and measuring the current situation where data are available.
- Case studies will not be included, as they are viewed as less critical to the requirements of the legislation.
- Avoiding complex administrative structures, particularly the use of theme based Advisory Groups.

Other actions that are being assessed to respond to respond to budget limitations are:

- Higher-level grouping of priority issues (e.g. assess threatening processes at a higher level such as 'habitat change' in the Biodiversity Chapter rather than the individual components of habitat change)

- Remove those issues that are dealt with by other processes (e.g. some socio-economic issues were included in SoE 2003 on the basis that they form part of the livability of settlements, and therefore are part of the environment of settlements)
- Reduce the coverage of the cultural heritage chapter, through focusing on selected indicators relating to built heritage and cultural landscapes.

Attachment 1 is a database report from the SoE System showing the current allocation of staff to the key components of the report, namely issues and indicators. Many issues and indicators remain unallocated at this stage. The attachment does not show work in progress on recommendations and other key parts of the report. It highlights that staff time is allocated across a diverse number of issues and indicators. Because the Project Officer (GIS) provides data management and mapping support, fewer issues and indicators have been allocated at this stage.

The process to prepare SoE 2008 is supported through the use of a content management system (SoE System), which was developed for SoE 2003. This SoE System is also now in use by the Australian Government for the national SoE Report (scheduled for release this year) and Queensland Environment Protection Agency for their SoE Online. The use of the SoE System will provide a significant saving on publication costs as well as allow interaction with the increasing number of on-line resources such as the Water Information System Tasmania and other local and national databases. A new development is the use of web based forms to allow input from a variety of sources over the Internet.

The previous report (SoE 2003) made use of a number of fixed term positions and short consultancies to support the process of compiling information. The following table outlines the key appointments and consultancies used for SoE 2003 and their status for SoE 2008. The fixed term appointments varied between 3 and 12 months, while consultancies were generally less than 2 months.

Table 1: Key fixed term appointments and short term consultancies (SoE 2003)

Position	Purpose	Status for SoE 2008
Short term consultancy water quality indicators	Compile data from water quality databases and present as indicators	Not required as direct links to water quality and quantity databases secured and methodology now defined. Reviews of the analysis are required.
Short-term consultancy, vegetation change and land cover classification	Prepare vegetation change assessment and land cover classification.	Not required as the TASVEG program is now preparing these outputs and the SoE will incorporate these (subject to timing of release). Work still required to process and analyse data.
Consultancy to develop SoE reporting system	Develop the SoE System for on-line reporting.	Occasional update and maintenance required only improving functionality.
Fixed-term appointment, web	Support data entry to the SoE System	Not required. This position assisted with data entry for the

support		report. The work is done effectively within the Unit as part of work processes.
Fixed-term appointment, Land and Biodiversity Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Land and Biodiversity	Necessary but currently not funded.
Fixed-term appointment, Cultural Heritage Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Cultural Heritage	Necessary but currently not funded.
Fixed-term appointment, Settlements Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Settlements	Necessary but currently not funded.
Short term consultancy, Coastal, Estuarine and Marine Indicators	Compile data to support key indicators and issue reports for Coastal, Estuarine and Marine	Necessary but currently not funded.
Short term consultancy, land use and inland waters	Compile the land cover and inland waters issue report in the Inland Waters and Wetlands chapter	Avoidable depending on overall work load on staff
Editorial support and independent review	Several consultancies to edit the report for readability and style.	Necessary but currently not funded.

Relationship with NRM

Establishing a working relationship with NRM in delivering information on environmental and resource condition is a key requirement as there is no value in duplicating reporting infrastructure for essentially the same data and reporting outcomes. Options currently being considered to support this include establishing an integrated Statewide report, perhaps entitled State of the Environment and Natural Resources. The report would promote data sharing and aim to report in an integrated way on the priority NRM and SoE indicators using the SoE System. Working towards an integrated SoE and NRM report is likely to be well-received by government in terms of efficient use of public resources and avoiding duplication.

Testing of data and recommendations

Advisory Groups were used for SoE 1997 and SoE 2003 as a means to support the supply of information and to provide necessary external scrutiny and review. The administrative framework comprising an overarching management committee (the Commission) and a series of technical specialist committees is similar to other integrated reporting programs such as that for the Derwent estuary.

However, there are some significant shortcomings in advisory groups, particularly:

- Membership for advisory groups involved in testing data is not the same as advisory groups involved in testing proposed recommendations (science and

policy have clear demarcations in agencies). The delay between completion of the third report and tabling can be attributed in part to this separation.

- There is less capacity for public sector employees from environmental and natural resource agencies to contribute to on-going processes.
- There is insufficient resourcing to sustain the necessary level of administrative support for the eight committees needed for each of the major chapters in the report, while also researching and writing the report.

It is proposed that ad hoc committees or informal hearings be used to test data and recommendations for the third SoE Report. These processes would be used to focus and expedite government responses to draft content, which was an additional source for delay during the preparation of the third report. The convening of these processes would be determined as required between the Manager RPDC, the proposed SoE Report Panel (Attachment 2), and the Senior Project Officer (SoE).

There is an option to make the draft SoE Report available for public review as this will provide process and content benefits. In particular, it will allow draft recommendations to be tested in a wider forum; and it will allow the agency comment period to be focused on a key milestone ahead of the report's final deadline. It is intended that this would expedite agency comments on the report. The SoE System was designed for content to be released as a public draft.

There are a number of opportunities for Commissioner engagement in the SoE process. This would include Commissioner review of draft content (prior to the agency review period and public release of the draft report), Commissioner representation on ad hoc committees; and drafting of content by Commissioners. Appointment of Commissioners is sought a proposed SoE Report Panel (see Attachment 2 for draft terms of reference).

Timing of SoE 2008

SoE 2008 is due for completion before September 2008, which will bring the completion date ahead of the 5 yearly statutory schedule by six months from the date of tabling The draft 2008 password protected website is now available. The first set of indicators is currently being prepared and will be available for review by the Commission prior to circulation to agencies for comment.

The timing of the release of the report in 2008 coincides with the 10 year RFA review, so there will be opportunities for synergy between this review and the SoE Report. Key opportunities for synergy include the use of common data sources and indicators.

Census products from the 2006 Census will be released during 2007, so there will be an opportunity to include this data in SoE 2008.

Based on the processes detailed above, the following key milestones are proposed.

Milestones

Milestone	Date
Technical review stage: Draft content released as a rolling program to Commissioner(s) for review, and then circulated to agency or external technical reviewers. Agency comments are received,	From October 2006

documented and responses made as required. This process is intended to resolve any issues in advance of the more formal policy review stage.	
Policy review stage: Finalise all content including recommendations to draft for agency review stage. Commission approves release of draft content for agency review. Draft content made available for agency review for 4 weeks. Conduct ad hoc committee meetings or closed hearings of draft content with agencies/ consultants and reviewers. This also enables agencies to review content in its entirety prior to public release.	October 2007
Release draft report: Commission approval to release draft report. Release draft report for public comment (remove password protection on website, content remains as draft)	December 2007
Public comment period closes	February 2008
Finalise responses to public comments	April 2008
Commission approval to release final report	July 2008
Tabling in Parliament	September 2008

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. appoint Commissioners to a proposed State of the Environment Report Panel
2. approve the terms of reference for the Panel (Attachment 2)
3. approve the timeframe for the release of a draft report by December 2007 and tabling the final report in September 2008.

Officer: Stephen Waight

Title: Senior Project Officer

Date: 23 August 2006

D5. 2006-07 Initiative Requests– Summary

Table D5: 2006-07 Initiative Requests

Rank	Initiative	WoG (Y/N)	Timeframe/ Total Cost	2006-07 Additional funding requested	2007-08 Additional funding requested	2008-09 Additional funding requested	2009-10 Additional funding requested
				$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Equal 1	Extension Service		Permanent	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
Equal 1	Library		14.30	14.30			
Equal 1	State of the Environment Reporting		Permanent	23.70	13.70	13.70	13.70
Total				45.00	20.70	20.70	20.70

D5. 2006-07 Initiative Requests

Title	STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORTING
Type of Initiative	Enhancement Initiative
Brief Description	The Commission has the responsibility under Section 29 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* for the preparation of a consolidated State of the Environment Report every five years. The third report is due in calendar year 2007.
Reason for Initiative	The initiative seeks to establish a budget to enable the completion of the current report, to provide a funding framework for future reports, and for the ongoing maintenance of the software used to produce the report.
Link to Budget Drivers	Agency to complete
Approach and Desired Outcomes	The approach provides an avenue for determining the manner in which the report's Recommendations will be formulated and for engaging appropriately qualified consultants to assist the Commission to test the data provided by Agencies and others and formulate the Recommendations. The amount sought represents the estimated cost of sitting/meeting fees for the consultants referred to above, and the estimated annual cost of maintaining the software.
Effectiveness of Approach	The approach is similar to that used in relation to past reports.
Performance Measures	The accuracy and integrity of the report, and its completion on time.
Risk of not Implementing the Initiative	Lack of funding for this initiative may result in the inability of the Commission to fulfil its legislative responsibilities.
Partner Agencies	All Agencies have the opportunity to provide input to the report, and this is actively sought during the preparation process.
Impact on other Agencies	Has the potential to benefit all agencies by the production of a report that is accurate and comprehensive.

Timeframe	Permanent				
Initiative Costs	TOTAL $'000	2006-07 $'000	2007-08 $'000	2008-09 $'000	2009-10 $'000
Permanent		23.70	13.70	13.70	13.70
Fixed Term					
Additional Funding Requested		23.70	13.70	13.70	13.70