

MEETING WITH BRENDAN WINTLE AND MARTIN MARON, TSR HUB
Friday 30 August
with Nicholas Post, Sally Box

What we want

- To reach an agreed understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Hub.
- To decide on a way forward on the Spending to Save paper
- s22 [REDACTED]

What they want

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Key points

1. Roles and responsibilities of the TSR Hub

- The primary role of the Hub is to deliver research to inform environmental decision makers.
- The Hub's end users and stakeholders include government (various departments and various levels of government), ENGOs, Indigenous groups, industry and the public.
- The aim of the Hub's public-facing communication is to establish the Hub as an authority on matters relating to threatened species conservation and to improve the public's interest in and awareness of threatened species, and involvement in their conservation. (*TSR Hub Communication and engagement Plan 2016*). This element of the Hub's communication is not explicitly about informing environmental decisions.
- In order to inform environmental decisions, the Hub should work directly and collaboratively with policy makers, not try to steer policy change through advocacy-like pathways (i.e. via the public).
- The Hub should be clear in their minds when preparing any public facing communications or media on what the objectives of that piece of communication are.
- Thank you to the Hub for maintaining a collaborative approach to working with the Department on communications products. Where there are ideas to develop products that are not a neat fit within the Hub's role of communicating research findings, we suggest that in order to ensure good outcomes the Hub discuss the objectives of these products with the Department ahead of developing them.

See **Attachment A** for background on what the key NESP and TSR Hub guidance documents say about the role of the hub in working with decision makers, communicating with the public and giving the Department notice of any publications and media.

2. 'Spending to Save' paper

Background

The Wintle et al paper '*Spending to save: what will it cost to halt Australia's extinction crisis?*', which has been submitted to Conservation Letters, (**Attachment B**) builds on the Hub's analysis of the comparison between Australian and US spending on threatened species, which they undertook for their submission to the Senate Inquiry into Faunal Extinctions. Brendan also referred to these figures in his interview for the Four Corners 'Extinction Nation' program.

The Hub originally submitted this paper to us as an output under synthesis Project 7.7 – *Overlaying threat, threatened species ranges, threat mitigation and conservation options – a knowledge synthesis to inform a national approach to fighting extinction*. The project plan for Project 7.7 doesn't mention a paper or study like this as an output. There is some mention in the project plan about costs of conservation strategies for threatened species, but this is referring to the costs of particular actions to feed into recovery plans and plan allocation of investments.

After subsequent discussions with s47F, Brendan has agreed that it is a stretch to classify this paper as a Hub product and agreed to remove Hub branding/affiliation from the paper.

In his discussion with s47F at the time, Brendan explained that the objective of this paper was to trigger high-level policy and political discussion about the need to increase spending on threatened species recovery and how this could be achieved. The intention was then to use this paper as a discussion starter to brief exec and the Minister's Office on the findings of the work and policy implications. Brendan said they wanted to highlight the need for transparent reporting of threatened species recovery expenditure and to work with the Department on how we could account for threatened species expenditure in order to support such reporting.

Department's concerns with approach

- If the authors' objective was to trigger a discussion with policy makers, a more appropriate and constructive way of achieving this would have been to come directly to the Department to have this discussion, rather than trying to 'trigger' it through a publication (and the media).
- 'Triggering political discussions' is not one of the roles, responsibilities or objectives of NESP Hubs.
- Adopting an advocacy-type approach can make a Hub appear to have political bias, which undermines credibility of both the Hub and program as a provider of unbiased-science.

Options

Option 1: The authors publish the paper without hub affiliation, after consulting the Department on their calculations of Australian Government spending on Threatened Species.

Option 2: They don't publish the paper.

Option 3: They publish the paper with a different set of authors, individuals who do not represent the Hub leadership and/or knowledge brokering team.

In discussing the options for this paper, we should focus on the objectives the authors were trying to achieve, and discuss whether this paper is likely to be the most effective way to achieve those. Given we have now agreed with the hub that this paper is not a hub product, it

is not really within our remit to instruct them not to publish it or to drastically change the authorship, but we may mutually arrive at this point through a discussion of how best to achieve their objectives.

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ATTACHMENTS

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B. 'Spending to Save' paper

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From: §47F
To: §47F
Subject: RE: Senate estimates - Topical issues for Threatened Species - updated [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 12 November 2019 9:57:25 AM

Hi §47F

The brief didn't get fully cleared by Sally, but Sally wanted it printed out and added to her pack anyway. I printed it out and gave it to Emma letting her know this. It's not ideal, but most of the new text has been cleared in one way or another, so hopefully will be pretty low risk.

Regards

§47F

From: §47F

Sent: Monday, 11 November 2019 6:38 PM

To: §47F

Cc: §47F ; §47F ; §47F

Subject: RE: Senate estimates - Topical issues for Threatened Species - updated [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks for the update.

Once the brief has been cleared by Sally can you please provide a printed copy to §47F so she can add it to Emma's SE folder.

-§47F

From: §47F

Sent: Monday, 11 November 2019 4:37 PM

To: Sally Box <Sally.Box@environment.gov.au>; §47F <§47F@environment.gov.au>; Steve Costello <Steve.Costello@environment.gov.au>; Geoff Richardson <Geoff.Richardson@environment.gov.au>

Cc: §47F <§47F@environment.gov.au>; §47F <§47F@environment.gov.au>; §47F <§47F@environment.gov.au>

Subject: Senate estimates - Topical issues for Threatened Species - updated [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi all

We've made some last minute changes to the senate estimates brief on topical issues for threatened species to include talking points on the "Spending to Save" article (although as of 4pm Monday afternoon the full article is not available) §22

§47E(d)

The points on Spending to Save were cleared and sent the MO last Friday §22

§22

Regards

§47F

Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner

Biodiversity Conservation Division

Australian Department of the Environment and Energy

P: §47F

E: §47F <§47F@environment.gov.au>

The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

From: s47F
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Senate estimates - Topical issues for Threatened Species - updated [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 12 November 2019 10:15:50 AM

If you guys are comfortable with it than I am comfortable with it. Thanks for getting it to Emma.

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 12 November 2019 9:57 AM
To: s47F <@environment.gov.au>
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