



National leadership on knife and youth crime	
Party:	The Coalition
<p>Summary of proposal:</p> <p>The proposal would support a national roll-out of enhanced measures to combat knife and youth crime. It would support and provide funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a national roll-out of detector wands, in every jurisdiction, to empower police to get weapons off our streets• co-operation with states and territories to develop uniform knife laws across all jurisdictions, including laws to give police the power to stop and search people using detector wands. <p>The proposal would start from 1 July 2025.</p>	
<p>Additional information (based on further advice provided):</p> <p>As part of the national roll-out, detector wands would be provided to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and all state and territory police departments across the country, fully funded by the Commonwealth.</p> <p>Under the proposal, a 2-year trial of ‘focused deterrence’ policing strategies would take place across all states and territories, fully funded by the Commonwealth, to address knife and youth crime hotspots.</p>	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$29.6 million over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). This impact reflects an increase in administered and departmental expenses.

The proposal would be expected to have an impact beyond the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period. A breakdown of the financial implications (including separate public debt interest (PDI) tables) over the period to 2035-36 is provided at Attachment A.

Table 1: National leadership on knife and youth crime – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-18.1	-11.1	-0.1	-0.3	-29.6
Underlying cash balance	-18.1	-11.1	-0.1	-0.3	-29.6

(a) A positive number represents an increase in the relevant budget balance; a negative number represents a decrease.

(b) PDI impacts are not included in the totals.

Uncertainties

The cost of a national wand roll-out is sensitive to the ratio of wands to police officers. The ratio used in this costing is based on Queensland's implementation of Jack's Law. Any potential differences in implementation strategy between Queensland and other states, territories or the AFP are likely to result in a difference in cost. There are also sensitivities regarding the timing and resources for the Australian government to negotiate with states and territories and organise the roll out of wands.

The cost of focused deterrence policing programs is sensitive and highly dependent on the number of groups and individuals targeted by the program, which would vary significantly depending on the specific location in which such a program was implemented.

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has used program costs based on historical average costs from similar programs undertaken in the United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK). This approach does not account for changes in expenses that can arise from geographic differences between specific regional locations domestically, and variances across locations in Australia compared to the USA or UK. There are also sensitivities regarding the timing and resources for the Australian government to negotiate with states and territories.

Key assumptions

The PBO has made the following assumptions in costing this proposal:

- Funding for the national detector wand roll-out would be provided to police services in all Australian states and territories, regardless of any existing state-based policies that may be in-force.
- Annually, 5% of wands would need to be replaced, with costs only incurred outside of a 3-year warranty period for the wands.
- Annually, 2% of supporting wand accessories would need to be replaced, with costs only incurred outside of a 1-year warranty period for the accessories.
- Annual cost of a focused deterrence pilot program is 25% higher in the first year to account for set-up costs including for policy development and program management.
- No costs would be incurred after the conclusion of a focused deterrence pilot program.
- The focused deterrence pilot program costs would not include any costs associated with detector wands.
- A 0.5 FTE role at the Executive Level 1 (EL1) level would be required within the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) for oversight and management of focused deterrence program roll-out in the states and territories.
- The Commonwealth and state/territory governments would negotiate which entity would absorb any additional costs.
- The focused deterrence trials in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and one other state/territory would be smaller in scale and thus involve reduced costs.

Methodology

- Estimates of the total number of patrolling/field officers for each state/territory police department and the AFP was sourced and estimated from police annual reports.

- A projected growth rate for police officer numbers was estimated based on historical occupation growth rates from labour statistics data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
- The per unit cost of outfitting police officers with wands and a ratio of wands to officers was estimated from information sourced from the Queensland Police's 2024 *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* and supplementary sources.
- Cost estimates for focused deterrence program were based on available historical costs of 12 similar programs undertaken in the USA and UK, adjusted for exchange rates and inflation.
- Focused deterrence program costs were indexed in line with Wage Cost Index (WCI) 1.
- Departmental costs for the EL1 role were indexed in line with WCI 3.

Financial implications were rounded consistent with the PBO's rounding rules.¹

Data sources

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¹ <https://www.pbo.gov.au/for-parliamentarians/how-we-analyse/pbo-rounding-rules>

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Victoria Police (2023) [*Victoria Police Annual Report 2022-23*](#), Victoria Police, State Government of Victoria, accessed 16 May 2025.

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Youth Endowment Fund (2024) [*Focused deterrence*](#), Youth Endowment Fund website, accessed 16 May 2025.

Attachment A – National leadership on knife and youth crime – Financial implications

Table A1: National leadership on knife and youth crime – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)^(a)

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	Total to 2028-29	Total to 2035-36
Expenses													
Administered													
<i>State & territory detector wand roll-out</i>	-4.4	-0.1	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-4.9	-7.9
<i>State & territory 2-year focused deterrence trial</i>	-12.5	-10.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-22.7	-22.7
Total – administered	-16.9	-10.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-27.6	-30.6
Departmental													
<i>AFP - ACT detector wand roll-out</i>	-0.2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	-0.2	-0.2
<i>AFP - ACT 2-year focused deterrence trial</i>	-0.9	-0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1.6	-1.6
<i>AGD - Oversight of focused deterrence trial roll-out</i>	-0.1	-0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.2	-0.2
Total – departmental	-1.2	-0.8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	-2.0	-2.0
Total (excluding PDI)	-18.1	-11.1	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-29.6	-32.6

(a) A positive number for the fiscal balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A negative number for the fiscal balance indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A positive number for the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in receipts or a decrease in payments or net capital investment in cash terms. A negative number for the underlying cash balance indicates a decrease in receipts or an increase in payments or net capital investment in cash terms.

.. Not zero but rounded to zero.

- Indicates nil.

Table A2: National leadership on knife and youth crime – Memorandum item: Public Debt Interest (PDI) impacts – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	Total to 2028-29	Total to 2035-36
Fiscal balance	-0.4	-1.1	-1.4	-1.4	-1.5	-1.6	-1.7	-1.8	-1.9	-2.0	-2.1	-4.3	-16.9
Underlying cash balance	-0.3	-0.9	-1.3	-1.4	-1.5	-1.6	-1.7	-1.8	-1.9	-2.0	-2.1	-3.9	-16.5

(a) As this table is presented as a memorandum item, these figures are not reflected in the totals above. This is consistent with the approach taken in the budget where the budget impact of most measures is presented excluding the impact on PDI. If the reader would like a complete picture of the total aggregate, then these figures would need to be added to the figures above. For further information on government borrowing and financing please refer to the PBO's online budget glossary².

(b) A positive number for the fiscal balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A negative number for the fiscal balance indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses or net capital investment in accrual terms. A positive number for the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in receipts or a decrease in payments or net capital investment in cash terms. A negative number for the underlying cash balance indicates a decrease in receipts or an increase in payments or net capital investment in cash terms.

² [Online budget glossary – Parliamentary Budget Office \(pbo.gov.au\)](https://pbo.gov.au)