



Abolish public school fees	
Party:	Australian Greens
Summary of proposal: The proposal would abolish all public school fees and provide schools with additional funding to replace fees charged to parents and carers. The policy would be ongoing and start on 1 July 2026.	
Additional information (based on further advice provided): The proposal would supplement school funding by the national average school fee normally charged to parents. Funding would be indexed to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) indexation rate.	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$4.0 billion over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). This impact reflects an increase in administered expenditure associated with an increase in school funding to offset the removal of out-of-pocket fees for public schools.

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.

The financial implications of this proposal would be sensitive to changes in out-of-pocket expenses, the number of public school enrolments, other policies that impact Commonwealth funding, and negotiations with states and territories.

Table 1: Abolish public school fees – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-	-1,290.0	-1,340.0	-1,380.0	-4,010.0
Underlying cash balance	-	-1,290.0	-1,340.0	-1,380.0	-4,010.0

(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.

- Indicates nil.

Key assumptions

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has made the following assumptions in costing this proposal.

- In 2026, the average out-of-pocket fees would be \$492 per student in a government school, based on historical data from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). This figure may exclude some fees associated with extra-curricular activities offered through a school.
- Growth rates for out-of-pocket fees would be consistent with the average growth rate of previous contributions between 2010 and 2019.
 - Changes between 2019 and 2023 were not included due to volatility in the data resulting from the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic response on the school system.
- 50% of out-of-pocket fees would have already been incurred by 1 July 2026 and only a half payment would be supplied by the Commonwealth in the 2026 school year.
- States and territories would agree to the revised funding arrangements including the removal of out-of-pocket fees. The funding would not form part of the co-funding arrangement for schools and the Commonwealth would instead fund 100% of the additional cost.

Methodology

The Australian Government Department of Education provided the Commonwealth School Recurrent Funding Model (which includes the SRS indexation rate and student population projections) for the analysis in this response.

- The annual out-of-pocket public-school fees paid by parents or guardians was calculated based on data on the average income for public schools from fees, charges, and parent contributions from ACARA.
- The PBO indexed the average payment by the SRS indexation factor over the forward estimates and medium term, multiplied by the forecast government school student population.

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

Data sources

The Australian Government Department of Education provided the Commonwealth School Recurrent Funding Model as at the Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025, inclusive of the SRS indexation factor.

Commonwealth of Australia (2025) *Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025*, Commonwealth of Australia.

Information on parent contributions and fees charged was sourced from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's [School income](#) dataset, accessed on 8 May 2025.

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

Attachment A – Abolish public school fees – Financial implications

Table A1: Abolish public school fees – 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>Additional funding for public schools</i>	-	-1,290.0	-1,340.0	-1,380.0	-1,430.0	-1,470.0	-1,510.0	-1,550.0	-1,590.0	-1,640.0	-1,690.0	-4,010.0	-14,890.0
Total (excluding PDI)	-	-1,290.0	-1,340.0	-1,380.0	-1,430.0	-1,470.0	-1,510.0	-1,550.0	-1,590.0	-1,640.0	-1,690.0	-4,010.0	-14,890.0

- (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.
- Indicates nil.

Table A2: Abolish public school fees – 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	-	-29.0	-88.0	-152.0	-221.0	-296.0	-375.0	-461.0	-553.0	-652.0	-758.0	-269.0	-3,585.0
Underlying cash balance	-	-22.0	-73.0	-136.0	-204.0	-277.0	-356.0	-440.0	-530.0	-627.0	-731.0	-231.0	-3,396.0

- (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.
- Indicates nil.

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