



Establish an independent single media regulator	
Party:	Australian Greens
Summary of proposal: The proposal would establish an independent, single media regulator that has regulatory powers across all platforms including broadcast, print and online. The proposal would start on 1 July 2026 and be ongoing.	
Additional information (based on further advice provided): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The regulator would replace the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and be 3 times the size of ACMA's current staffing and budget allocation.• The regulator would have powers that include setting industry standards, local content rules, community safety and handling of breaches and complaints.	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$952 million over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). This impact reflects an increase in 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.

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has not made any assessment as to whether the specified funding would be sufficient to meet the objectives of the proposal.

Table 1: Establish an independent single media regulator – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-	-325.0	-318.0	-309.0	-952.0
Underlying cash balance	-	-325.0	-318.0	-309.0	-952.0

(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 PBO has made the following assumption in costing the proposal.

- Appropriation funding for ACMA would be ongoing at the level outlined in the 2025-26 Budget Portfolio Budget Statement, with the departmental appropriation for 2025-26 being \$167.8 million, with an Average Staff Level (ASL) of 696.

Methodology

- The annual appropriation baseline was calculated by taking ACMA's annual appropriation amount across the forward estimates and calculating it across the medium term by indexing the amount by Wage Cost Index 3 less an efficiency dividend.
- The baseline was then tripled for each year, for the new Independent Single Media regulator funding.
- The difference between the independent media regulator funding and the original AMCA funding was calculated as the impact of the policy.

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

Data sources

Commonwealth of Australia (2025) *2025-26 Budget, Australian Communications and Media Authority Portfolio Budget Statements* (infrastructure.gov.au), Commonwealth of Australia, accessed 15 May 2025.

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

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

Attachment A – Establish an independent single media regulator – Financial implications

Table A1: Establish an independent single media regulator – 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
Departmental													
<i>Redirection of ACMA resourcing</i>	-	163.0	159.0	154.0	156.0	158.0	160.0	162.0	165.0	167.0	169.0	476.0	1,613.0
<i>Independent single media regulator resourcing</i>	-	-488.0	-477.0	-463.0	-469.0	-475.0	-481.0	-487.0	-493.0	-500.0	-506.0	-1,428.0	-4,839.0
Total – departmental	-	-325.0	-318.0	-309.0	-313.0	-317.0	-321.0	-325.0	-328.0	-333.0	-337.0	-952.0	-3,226.0
Total (excluding PDI)	-	-325.0	-318.0	-309.0	-313.0	-317.0	-321.0	-325.0	-328.0	-333.0	-337.0	-952.0	-3,226.0

(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: Establish an independent single media regulator – 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	-	-7.0	-22.0	-37.0	-52.0	-68.0	-86.0	-104.0	-124.0	-144.0	-166.0	-66.0	-810.0
Underlying cash balance	-	-5.0	-18.0	-33.0	-48.0	-64.0	-81.0	-100.0	-119.0	-139.0	-161.0	-56.0	-768.0

(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)