



Establish a Prices Commission and accompanying divestiture and price gouging laws	
Party:	Australian Greens
Summary of proposal: The proposal would: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish a Prices Commission as a Commonwealth entity to monitor price setting across the economy. Staffing levels would be equivalent to the Productivity Commission.• introduce new price gouging laws and divestiture powers to be enforced by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)• add an additional 20 full-time jobs in the ACCC to investigate gouging and act on referrals from the Prices Commission. The proposal would be ongoing and start on 1 July 2025.	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$192.2 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.

Table 1: Establish a Prices Commission and accompanying divestiture and price gouging laws – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-53.4	-45.7	-46.3	-46.8	-192.2
Underlying cash balance	-53.4	-45.7	-46.3	-46.8	-192.2

(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.

Key assumptions

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

- Enabling legislation for the proposed divestiture powers and the standing up of the Prices Commission would be passed prior to the proposal start date.
- Departmental resourcing allocated to the Prices Commission would be equivalent in size to the Productivity Commission.
- Recruitment and onboarding costs for the additional resourcing would be absorbed by the ACCC.

Methodology

The financial impacts of the departmental resourcing allocated to the Prices Commission was estimated by scaling the staffing profile published in the 2023-24 Productivity Commission annual report to the Productivity Commission's staffing levels reported in the 2025-26 Budget. The total remuneration of individual Board members was based on the actual salaries of Productivity Commission Board members.

The extra staff for the ACCC was added as a small branch.

Departmental expenses were calculated using the PBO's departmental costs calculator, indexed to Wage Cost Index 3 less an efficiency dividend.

Estimation of possible revenue from fines from ACCC action have not been included.

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

Data sources

Commonwealth of Australia (2025) *2025-26 Budget Paper No. 4*, Commonwealth of Australia.

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

Productivity Commission (2024) [Productivity Commission annual report 2023-24](#), accessed 14 May 2025.

Productivity Commission (2025) [Organisation structure](#), accessed 14 May 2025.

Remuneration Tribunal (2025) [Remuneration Tribunal \(Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Full-time Public Office\) Determination 2024 Compilation No. 7](#), accessed 14 May 2025.

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

Attachment A – Establish a Prices Commission and accompanying divestiture and price gouging laws – Financial implications

Table A1: Establish a Prices Commission and accompanying divestiture and price gouging laws – 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													
<i>Departmental</i>													
ACCC	-3.2	-3.2	-3.3	-3.3	-3.4	-3.4	-3.4	-3.5	-3.5	-3.6	-3.6	-13.0	-37.4
Prices Commission	-50.2	-42.5	-43.0	-43.5	-44.1	-44.6	-45.2	-45.8	-46.4	-47.0	-47.6	-179.2	-499.9
Total – departmental	-53.4	-45.7	-46.3	-46.8	-47.5	-48.0	-48.6	-49.3	-49.9	-50.6	-51.2	-192.2	-537.3
Total (excluding PDI)	-53.4	-45.7	-46.3	-46.8	-47.5	-48.0	-48.6	-49.3	-49.9	-50.6	-51.2	-192.2	-537.3

(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.

Table A2: Establish a Prices Commission and accompanying divestiture and price gouging laws – 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
<i>Fiscal balance</i>	-1.2	-3.4	-5.6	-7.9	-10.4	-13.0	-15.7	-18.6	-21.7	-25.0	-28.5	-18.1	-151.0
<i>Underlying cash balance</i>	-0.9	-2.9	-5.1	-7.3	-9.8	-12.3	-15.0	-17.9	-20.9	-24.2	-27.6	-16.2	-143.9

(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://www.pbo.gov.au/online-budget-glossary)