



Establish a Land and Sea Country Commissioner	
Party:	Australian Greens
<p>Summary of proposal:</p> <p>The proposal would establish a Land and Sea Commissioner to be an independent First Nations voice to guide the protection and management of Australia's environment and its interlinked Indigenous cultural heritage values.</p> <p>The proposal would start on 1 July 2026.</p>	
<p>Additional information (based on further advice provided):</p> <p>This position would be established in the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> as an independent statutory officeholder, similar to the Threatened Species Commissioner.</p> <p>Provide \$25 million per year (ongoing and including departmental costs) would be established to ensure First Nations peoples can participate and lead on environmental protection and restoration nation-wide.</p>	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$79.2 million over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). This impact reflects an increase in departmental and administered expenses.

The proposal would 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 a Land and Sea Country Commissioner– Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-	-26.5	-26.3	-26.4	-79.2
Underlying cash balance	-	-26.5	-26.3	-26.4	-79.2

(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.

- Indicates nil.

Key assumptions

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

- Any legislation required to establish the Commissioner as an independent statutory office holder would pass before the start date of the proposal.

- No funds allocated in a given year are left unspent.

Methodology

Funding would be provided for a land and sea commissioner and a team of 4 staff to execute their functions. Departmental costs were calculated using the PBO's departmental costs calculator, indexed to Wage Cost Index 3 less an efficiency dividend. Provision was made for implementation costs in the first year.

Total funding for the associated fund would be capped at a fixed annual amount (\$25 million a year), from the commencement date. Departmental expenses were estimated based on the cost of administering similar programs and are included within the capped funding amount. Administered expenses are as specified in the proposal, less expected departmental expenses.

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

Data sources

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

Departmental expenses were informed by similar measures in Commonwealth budgets from 2015-16 to 2021-22.

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

Attachment A – Establish a Land and Sea Country Commissioner – Financial implications

Table A1: Establish a Land and Sea Country Commissioner – 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>Participation Fund</i>	-	-23.5	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-72.1	-242.2
Total – administered	-	-23.5	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-24.3	-72.1	-242.2
Departmental													
<i>Land & Sea Commissioner</i>	-	-1.5	-1.2	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3	-1.4	-1.4	-4.0	-13.3
<i>Participation Fund</i>	-	-1.5	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-3.1	-8.7
Total – expenses	-	-26.5	-26.3	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.5	-26.5	-79.2	-264.2
Total (excluding PDI)	-	-26.5	-26.3	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.4	-26.5	-26.5	-79.2	-264.2

(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 a Land and Sea Country Commissioner – 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	-	-0.6	-1.8	-3.0	-4.3	-5.7	-7.1	-8.6	-10.2	-11.9	-13.6	-5.4	-66.8
Underlying cash balance	-	-0.4	-1.5	-2.7	-4.0	-5.3	-6.8	-8.2	-9.8	-11.5	-13.2	-4.6	-63.4

(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)