



Tertiary Education – Raise the PhD Stipend – Increase the Research Training Program stipend	
Party:	Australian Greens
Summary of proposal: The proposal would increase the full-time base Research Training Program (RTP) annual stipend to be equal to the minimum wage. The proposal would be ongoing and take effect from 1 July 2025.	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$1.3 billion over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). This impact reflects an increase in administered expenses due to the increases of the Research Training Program (RTP) annual stipend.

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 the proposal are uncertain and sensitive to a range of assumptions around the number of higher degree research (HDR) students who receive stipends and any behavioural response to the proposal. While a behavioural response to the proposal may increase the magnitude of the financial implications, the potential impact on other research support and/or scholarships has not been quantified.

Table 1: Tertiary Education – Raise the PhD Stipend – Increase the Research Training Program stipend – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-308.0	-316.0	-323.0	-332.0	-1,279.0
Underlying cash balance	-308.0	-316.0	-323.0	-332.0	-1,279.0

(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.

Key assumptions

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

- The number of students receiving the RTP stipend would grow in line with general population growth.
- Around 30% of HDR students would receive a stipend.
 - This is based on Department of Education data used in an Australian National University report.¹
- Implementation costs would be met from within the existing resources of relevant departments.

Methodology

The cost was estimated by multiplying the additional stipend amount per student by the number of students expected to receive the stipend.

A behavioural impact has not been quantified under the proposal, as this would depend on a range of factors including the availability of additional supervisors and projects, the sensitivity of students to financial incentives, and the selection process of universities in awarding RTP-backed scholarships.

Financial implications were rounded consistent with the PBO's rounding rules.²

Data sources

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

Department of Education, 2024. [Research Training Program - Department of Education, Australian Government](#), accessed 21 May 2025.

Fair Work Ombudsman, 2024. [Minimum wages - Fair Work Ombudsman](#), accessed 21 May 2025.

Norton, A. Mapping Australian higher education 2023 (ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods, 2023), accessed 21 May 2025.

¹ Norton, A. Mapping Australian higher education 2023 (ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods, 2023), accessed 4 December 2024.

² <https://www.pbo.gov.au/for-parliamentarians/how-we-analyse/pbo-rounding-rules>

Attachment A – Tertiary Education – Raise the PhD Stipend – Increase the Research Training Program stipend – Financial implications

Table A1: Tertiary Education – Raise the PhD Stipend – Increase the Research Training Program stipend – 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
Payments													
<i>Administered</i>													
<i>Stipend expenditure</i>	-308.0	-316.0	-323.0	-332.0	-341.0	-350.0	-360.0	-370.0	-380.0	-390.0	-400.0	-1,279.0	-3,870.0
Total – payments	-308.0	-316.0	-323.0	-332.0	-341.0	-350.0	-360.0	-370.0	-380.0	-390.0	-400.0	-1,279.0	-3,870.0
Total (excluding PDI)	-308.0	-316.0	-323.0	-332.0	-341.0	-350.0	-360.0	-370.0	-380.0	-390.0	-400.0	-1,279.0	-3,870.0

(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.

Table A2: Tertiary Education – Raise the PhD Stipend – Increase the Research Training Program stipend – 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>	-7.0	-21.0	-36.0	-52.0	-69.0	-88.0	-108.0	-129.0	-152.0	-176.0	-203.0	-116.0	-1,041.0
<i>Underlying cash balance</i>	-5.0	-17.0	-32.0	-48.0	-65.0	-83.0	-103.0	-124.0	-146.0	-170.0	-196.0	-102.0	-989.0

- (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 glossary³.
- (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.

³ [Online budget glossary – Parliamentary Budget Office \(pbo.gov.au\)](https://pbo.gov.au)