



Invest in the public service	
Party:	Australian Greens
<p>Summary of proposal:</p> <p>The proposal would strengthen the Australian Public Service (APS) through the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Component 1: Align future public service growth with population growth in Australia.• Component 2: Boost APS staffing levels through new employment opportunities, funded by savings from reducing expenditure on consulting firm contracts. <p>The proposal would be ongoing and start on 1 July 2026.</p>	

Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$12.9 billion 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: Invest in the public service – Financial implications (\$m)^{(a)(b)}

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-	-3,154.0	-4,426.0	-5,312.0	-12,892.0
Underlying cash balance	-	-3,154.0	-4,426.0	-5,312.0	-12,892.0

(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.

The financial implications of the proposal are highly sensitive to the estimated forecast of Average Statting Levels (ASL) in the budget baseline. As discussed in the Parliamentary Budget Office's (PBO) *Beyond the Budget 2024-25*,¹ the budget includes allowances only for announced policy. As such, forecasts will usually understate future outcomes as new measures are committed to and terminating programs are extended. This means that the baseline numbers include a decline in ASL (see Table 2 below).

¹ [Beyond the budget 2024-25: Fiscal outlook and sustainability | pbo.](#)

Table 2: Invest in the public service – Estimated baseline ASL^(a)

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Average staffing level (ASL) - baseline	209,913	213,349	197,088	192,662	190,870

(a) 2024-25 and 2025-26 ASL are as reported in 2025-26 Budget Paper 4. 2026-27 onwards reflects PBO estimates.

The financial estimates in this response are also sensitive to assumptions related to:

- Composition of the different agencies and levels of additional staff, including pay bands within grades and any additional allowances staff may be entitled to.
- Indexation rates for APS employee salaries.

Key assumptions

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

- In the baseline, ASL would decline in line with ‘Total cost of public services as a share of GDP’² over the forward estimates period. This is to reflect the falling total cost of the public service as a share of GDP as forecast in the 2025-26 Budget. ASL would then grow from the end of the forward estimates over the medium term in line with the annualised growth rate of public service ASL from the beginning of data collection in 1966 to the most recent year of data in 2024, around 1.11%.
- Additional staff would be employed in positions from Trainee to Executive level 2 – no additional Senior Executive Service staff would be employed as a result of this policy.
 - The profile of staff classifications would remain consistent with the proportions in 2024.

Methodology

Component 1

The proposed ASL was estimated by growing 2025-26 ASL, as reported in Budget Paper No. 4, by projected population growth each year. Baseline ASL and the classification profile of the additional staff were estimated per *Key assumptions*. The difference between the proposed and baseline ASL was input into the PBO’s departmental cost calculator to estimate the impact of the policy.

Component 2

Savings from reducing agency spending on consultants, to be redirected to spending on APS staff, were estimated in ECR-2025-3101.

Financial implications were rounded consistent with the PBO’s rounding rules.³

² Total cost of public services is estimated as the sum of ‘Total employee and superannuation expenses’ (2025-26 Budget paper 1, page 294) and ‘Supply of goods and services’ (the subcomponent, not the total, 2025-26 Budget paper 1, page 295).

³ <https://www.pbo.gov.au/for-parliamentarians/how-we-analyse/pbo-rounding-rules>

Data sources

Australian Public Service Commission (2025) [APS Employment database](#), Australian Public Service Commission.

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

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

Attachment A – Invest in the public service – Financial implications

Table A1: Invest in the public service – 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													
Departmental													
<i>Component 1: Staffing from population growth</i>	-	-3,010.0	-4,190.0	-4,980.0	-5,140.0	-5,300.0	-5,470.0	-5,640.0	-5,810.0	-5,970.0	-6,130.0	-12,180.0	-51,640.0
<i>Component 2: Staffing from savings on consultants</i>	-	-144.0	-236.0	-332.0	-422.0	-445.0	-467.0	-494.0	-516.0	-541.0	-566.0	-712.0	-4,163.0
Total – departmental	-	-3,154.0	-4,426.0	-5,312.0	-5,562.0	-5,745.0	-5,937.0	-6,134.0	-6,326.0	-6,511.0	-6,696.0	-12,892.0	-55,803.0
Total (excluding PDI)	-	-3,154.0	-4,426.0	-5,312.0	-5,562.0	-5,745.0	-5,937.0	-6,134.0	-6,326.0	-6,511.0	-6,696.0	-12,892.0	-55,803.0

(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: Invest in the public service – 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	-	-70.0	-240.0	-470.0	-730.0	-1,010.0	-1,320.0	-1,650.0	-2,010.0	-2,390.0	-2,800.0	-780.0	-12,690.0
Underlying cash balance	-	-50.0	-200.0	-410.0	-660.0	-940.0	-1,240.0	-1,570.0	-1,920.0	-2,300.0	-2,700.0	-660.0	-11,990.0

(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 glossary⁴.

(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.

⁴ [Online budget glossary – Parliamentary Budget Office \(pbo.gov.au\)](https://pbo.gov.au)