



### First Nations Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas

Party: Australian Greens

#### Summary of proposal:

The proposal would provide administrative support for Ranger Programs and Indigenous Protected Areas by:

- **component 1:** transferring the administration of Ranger Programs (known as the Indigenous Rangers Program) and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
- **component 2:** increasing the operational budgets of each ranger program by 10% (ongoing), enabling them to secure essential supplies and administrative support for enhanced land and sea management
- **component 3:** establishing a \$20 million annual budget (ongoing) within DCCEEW, allowing Ranger Programs and IPAs to undertake additional activities that are not covered by their regular budgets
- **component 4:** providing \$100 million over 4 years to strengthen the capacity of IPA administrators, ensuring both existing and new IPAs have the resources to deliver meaningful outcomes for country and community. Funding would be spread evenly over 4 years.

The proposal would include departmental funding within the administered component cap.

The proposal would start from 1 July 2026.

### Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$220 million over the 2025-26 Budget forward estimates period (see Table 1). This impact reflects an increase in administered and 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: First Nations Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas – Financial implications (\$m)<sup>(a)(b)</sup>**

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-	-72.5	-73.4	-74.4	<b>-220.3</b>
Underlying cash balance	-	-72.5	-73.4	-74.4	<b>-220.3</b>

(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 and methodology

### Component 1

Component 1 would be at no additional cost to the budget, as it would move program administration from one department to another, with no additional resourcing required. Expenses associated with moving staff from one department to another would be absorbed by both departments.

### Component 2

Component 2 takes the baseline of the existing Indigenous Rangers Program (IRP), including the expansion from the 2024-25 Budget and increases it by 10%. The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) provided the budgets for the current IRP up until 2027-28. From 2028-29 onwards, the funding was estimated by indexing to Wage Cost Index 3 (WCI-3).

### Component 3

Component 3 is capped at fixed amount each year, ongoing. Departmental expenses were estimated using the PBO's departmental costs calculator, indexed to WCI-3, less an efficiency dividend. Administered expenses are as specified in the proposal, less expected departmental expenses.

### Component 4

The proposal is capped at a fixed amount, evenly distributed over 4 years from the commencement date. Departmental expenses were estimated based on the cost of administering similar programs and are included within the capped amount. Administered expenses are as specified in the proposal, less expected departmental expenses.

We assume that no funds allocated to a given year are left unspent.

Financial implications were rounded consistent with the PBO's rounding rules.<sup>1</sup>

## Data sources

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

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

The NIAA provided information on the budget estimates for the Indigenous Rangers Program over the 2024-25 forward estimates.

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

## Attachment A – First Nations Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas – Financial implications

**Table A1: First Nations Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)<sup>(a)</sup>**

	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
<b>Expenses</b>													
<b>Administered</b>													
<i>Component 2 – operational budget for ranger program</i>	-	-27.0	-27.0	-28.0	-28.0	-28.0	-29.0	-29.0	-29.0	-30.0	-30.0	-82.0	-285.0
<i>Component 3 – additional program funding</i>	-	-19.0	-20.0	-20.0	-20.0	-21.0	-21.0	-21.0	-21.0	-22.0	-22.0	-59.0	-207.0
<i>Component 4 – strengthen capacity of IPA</i>	-	-24.0	-24.0	-24.0	-24.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-72.0	-96.0
<b>Total – administered</b>	-	-70.0	-71.0	-72.0	-72.0	-49.0	-50.0	-50.0	-50.0	-52.0	-52.0	-213.0	-588.0
<b>Departmental</b>													
<i>Component 1 – transfer program administration</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Component 2 – operational budget for ranger program</i>	-	-0.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-1.3	-4.8
<i>Component 3 – additional program funding</i>	-	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-3.0	-10.0
<i>Component 4 – strengthen capacity of IPA</i>	-	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-3.0	-4.0
<b>Total – departmental</b>	-	-2.5	-2.4	-2.4	-2.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-7.3	-18.8
<b>Total (excluding PDI)</b>	-	-72.5	-73.4	-74.4	-74.5	-50.5	-51.5	-51.5	-51.5	-53.5	-53.5	-220.3	-606.8

(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: First Nations Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas – Memorandum item: Public Debt Interest (PDI) impacts – Fiscal and underlying cash balances (\$m)<sup>(a)(b)</sup>**

	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
<b><i>Fiscal balance</i></b>	-	-1.6	-4.9	-8.4	-12.1	-15.4	-18.4	-21.5	-24.8	-28.3	-32.1	<b>-14.9</b>	<b>-167.5</b>
<b><i>Underlying cash balance</i></b>	-	-1.2	-4.1	-7.5	-11.2	-14.6	-17.6	-20.7	-24.0	-27.5	-31.1	<b>-12.8</b>	<b>-159.5</b>

- (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 glossary.<sup>2</sup>
- (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.

<sup>2</sup> [Online budget glossary – Parliamentary Budget Office \(pbo.gov.au\)](https://pbo.gov.au)