



### Prioritise the delivery of the 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans

Party: Australian Greens

#### Summary of proposal:

The proposal would provide \$2 billion over 10 years to prioritise the delivery of the 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans.

The funding would be front-loaded with \$250 million in 2025-26 to urgently prioritise initiatives to fully meet the 2025 water quality target, with the remainder of the \$2 billion distributed evenly across the following 9 years.

The proposal would be non-ongoing, include departmental funding from within the capped amount and start from 1 July 2025.

### Costing overview

The proposal would be expected to decrease the fiscal and underlying cash balances by around \$833 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: Prioritise the delivery of the 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans – Financial implications (\$m)<sup>(a)(b)</sup>**

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total to 2028-29
Fiscal balance	-249.5	-194.5	-194.5	-194.5	<b>-833.0</b>
Underlying cash balance	-249.5	-194.5	-194.5	-194.5	<b>-833.0</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.

### Key assumptions and methodology

The proposal is capped at a fixed amount, with \$250 million in 2025-26 and the remainder evenly distributed over the following 9 years (prior to rounding). 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. 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.

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

## Attachment A – Prioritise the delivery of the 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans – Financial implications

**Table A1: Prioritise the delivery of the 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans – 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>													
<i>Total – administered</i>	-238.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-190.0	-	-808.0	-1,948.0
<i>Total – departmental</i>	-11.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-	-25.0	-52.0
<b>Total (excluding PDI)</b>	<b>-249.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-194.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-833.0</b>	<b>-2,000.0</b>

(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: Prioritise the delivery of the 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans – 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
<i>Fiscal balance</i>	-6.0	-16.0	-25.0	-35.0	-45.0	-55.0	-67.0	-78.0	-91.0	-103.0	-113.0	-82.0	-634.0
<i>Underlying cash balance</i>	-4.0	-13.0	-23.0	-32.0	-42.0	-53.0	-64.0	-75.0	-87.0	-100.0	-111.0	-72.0	-604.0

(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 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.

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