



POLICY COSTING REQUEST – DURING THE CARETAKER PERIOD FOR A GENERAL ELECTION

Name of policy:	Protecting the Environment
Person requesting costing:	Senator Milne
Date of request to cost the policy:	5 September 2013
<i>Note: This policy costing request and the response to this request will be made publicly available.</i>	
Has a costing of this policy been requested under Section 29 of the Charter of Budget Honesty (i.e. from the Treasury or the Department of Finance and Deregulation)?	No
Details of the public release of this policy (Date, by whom and a reference to that release)	3 September 2013, Senator Milne, http://greens.org.au/sites/greens.org.au/files/Environment-Laws-That-Work.pdf
Description of policy:	
Summary of policy (as applicable, please attach copies of relevant policy documents):	As per the policy link to above: 1. Establish a sustainability commissioner to provide independent public advice on all/ all big environmental impact assessments, strategic assessments, major national environmental decisions, national environmental accounting and reporting; 2. Establish an accreditation scheme (with audit and compliance mechanisms) for all environmental impact professionals involved in projects being assessed under our national environmental law s and ongoing oversight accreditation scheme; 3. Greatly improve compliance and audit under the Act, including 20 extra staff and travel costs and consultancies; 4. Establish a community information unit; 5. Ensure feds have responsibility for all aspects of the environment when the impact is significant (not just silos), including water, forests, climate and national parks, and for proper cumulative impact assessments; 6. Change court costs rules to prohibit costs orders in public interest cases to support increased community access to justice 7. Require Ministerial decisions taken under our national environment laws to be consistent with the precautionary principle 8. Remove the power to delegate federal approval powers under our national laws to state governments from the act 9. Funding to protect World Heritage areas

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	No new unconventional gas (CSG, shale and tight gas projects) or coal mines be approved (nor the approval of any expansion of existing such activities). Reverse budget cuts to the Caring for our Country program.			
What is the purpose or intention of the policy?				
What are the key assumptions that have been made in the policy, including:				
Is the policy part of a package? If yes, list and outline components and interactions with proposed or existing policies.	Yes – other parts of the package include savings threatened species and restoring funding to the Biodiversity Fund, Wildlife cares support and saving the Great Barrier Reef. These policies have already been submitted to the PBO.			
Where relevant, is funding for the policy to be demand driven or a capped amount?	Capped.			
Will third parties (for instance the States/Territories) have a role in funding or delivering the policy? If yes, is the Australian Government contribution capped, with additional costs to be met by third parties, or is another funding formula envisaged?	No			
Are there associated savings, offsets or expenses? If yes, please provide details.	No			
Does the policy relate to a previous budget measure? If yes, which measure?	Cuts to Caring for our Country.			
If the proposal would change an existing measure, are savings expected from the departmental costs of implementing the program?	No			
Will the funding/program cost require indexation? If yes, list factors to be used.	No			
Expected impacts of the proposal				
If applicable, what are the estimated costs each year? If available, please provide details in the table below. Are these provided on an underlying cash balance or fiscal balance basis?				
Estimated financial implications (outturn prices) ^(a)				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17

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Underlying cash balance (\$m)	-20	-300	-585	-957
Fiscal balance (\$m)	-20	-300	-585	-957
(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 positive number in the underlying cash balance indicates an increase in revenue or a decrease in expenses or net capital investment in cash terms.				
What assumptions have been made in deriving the expected financial impact in the party costing (please provide information on the data sources used to develop the policy)?	See PBO costings			
Has the policy been costed by a third party? If yes, can you provide a copy of this costing and its assumptions?	Yes, PBO, 3 July 2013 and 7 August 2013			
What is the expected community impact of the policy? How many people will be affected by the policy? What is the likely take up? What is the basis for these impact assessments/assumptions?	Protection of the environment.			
Administration of policy:				
Who will administer the policy (for example, Australian Government entity, the States, non-government organisation, etc.)?	Australian Government			
Should departmental expenses associated with this policy be included in this costing? If no, will the Department be expected to absorb expenses associated with this policy? If yes, please specify the key assumptions, including whether departmental costs are expected with respect to program management (by policy agencies) and additional transactions/processing (by service delivery agencies).	Departmental expenses have been incorporated in to the capped amounts.			
Intended date of implementation.	1 July 2014, except for restoring Caring for our Country cuts and no new coal or coal seam gas.			

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Intended duration of policy.	ongoing
Are there transitional arrangements associated with policy implementation?	No
List major data sources utilised to develop policy (for example, ABS cat. no. 3201.0).	
Are there any other assumptions that need to be considered?	No

NOTE:

Please note that:

- *The costing will be on the basis of information provided in this costing request.*
- *The PBO is not bound to accept the assumptions provided by the requestor. If there is a material difference in the assumptions used by the PBO, the PBO will consult with the requestor in advance of the costing being completed.*