# Policy costing request—during the caretaker period for a general election

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| **Name of policy:** |  National Urban Forests Plan  |
| Person requesting costing: | Senator Di Natale |
| Parliamentary party:  | Australian Greens |
| Date of request to cost the policy: | 30 June 2016  |
| *Note: This policy costing request and the response to this request will be made publicly available.* |
| Has a costing of this policy been requested under Section 29 of the Charter of Budget Honesty (ie from the Treasury or the Department of Finance)? | No |
| Details of the public release of this policy (Date, by whom and a reference to that release): | Thursday 30th June 2016  |
| **Description of policy** |
| Summary of policy (as applicable, please attach copies of relevant policy documents): | The long term goal is to create a healthy and protected Urban National Park in every Australian major city, comprised of a series of significant protected bushland areas, connected together by metropolitan scale Greenways (or urban forests), green streets and household backyards across the metropolitan area.**We propose $25 million per year over ten years for:** * **$15m Urban Forest Acquisition Fund** to enable the states to purchase areas of high conservation value natural habitat in urban areas, particularly areas under direct threat from development or neglect
* **$5 million Community Grants** to enable local communities to contribute to the Greenways through precinct-scale or neighborhood scaleplantings or infrastructure such as amphitheaters, interpretive centres, walking trails and so on
* **$1m Household grants** to subsidise local area biodiversity plantings in front verges and backyards, to enable households to directly link in to the local greenway; made available via local Landcare groups, local councils and native nurseries
* **$1m to assist states and local councils develop local Urban Forest Plans** including mapping and planning linkages
* **$2m to establish an Aboriginal Stewardship Committee in each state** to steer planning and mapping of the greenways networks, and to engage Aboriginal businesses to develop cultural trails and deliver cultural, education and eco-tourism programs
* **$1m for ongoing maintenance** including tree audits every 3 years to measure tree canopy cover and health, and an interactive website with mapping tools and education resources
* **Introduce a federal moratorium on clearing of urban bushland** until each city has completed Strategic Environmental Assessment and an assessment of by the Threatened Species Commissioner
* **Establish an Urban Biodiversity Taskforce** within the re-established Major Cities Unit**,** responsible for coordinating the Greenways initiative from a planning and infrastructure perspective
* **Create a new category of National Park called ‘*Urban National Parks’* by 2020 - consisting of a series of interlinked urban forests and greenways.** This will be added to Australia’s National Reserve System, affording it maximum protection and status possible in Australian law**.** Australia’s National Reserve System currently includes and manages about 70% of Australia’s protected habitats, including National Parks.

**Copy attached.**  |
| What is the purpose or intention of the policy? | The Green Cities Fund will transform our cities to cooler, more liveable, greener places to live, as well as reduce carbon emissions. It Is a national plan to cool our cities, protect remaining habitat and increase the tree canopy and biodiversity at the metropolitan scale in a series of greenways that over the long term will become a protected “urban national park”: |
| **What are the key assumptions that have been made in the policy, including:** |
| Is the policy part of a package?If yes, list the components and interactions with proposed or existing policies. | No |
| Where relevant, is funding for the policy to be demand driven or a capped amount? If a capped amount, are the costs of administering the policy to be included within the capped amount or additional to the capped amount? | Capped at $25m per year over ten years  |
| Will third parties (for instance the States/Territories) have a role in funding or delivering the policy?If yes, is the Australian Government contribution capped, with additional costs to be met by third parties, or is another funding formula envisaged? | No |
| Are there associated savings, offsets or expenses?If yes, please provide details. | No |
| Does the policy relate to a previous budget measure? If yes, which measure? | No |
| If the proposal would change an existing measure, are savings expected from the departmental costs of implementing the program? | No |
| Will the funding/program cost require indexation?If yes, list factors to be used. | No |
| **Expected impacts of the proposal** |
| If applicable, what are the estimated costs each year? If available, please provide details in the table below. Are these provided on an underlying cash balance or fiscal balance basis? |
| **Estimated financial implications (outturn prices)(a)** |
|  | 2016–17 | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 |
| Underlying cash balance ($m) | -25 | -25 | -25 | -25 |
| Fiscal balance ($m) | -25 | -25 | -25 | -25  |
| 1. 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.
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| 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)? | N/A |
| Has the policy been costed by a third party?If yes, can you provide a copy of this costing and its assumptions? | No |
| 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? | 80% of Australia’s population lives in our major cities, this will have a positive impact on their communities. |
| **Administration of policy:** |
| Who will administer the policy (for example, Australian Government entity, the States, non‑government organisation, etc)? | The Australian Government.  |
| Please specify whether any special administrative arrangements are proposed for the policy and whether these are expected to involve additional transactions/processing (by service delivery agencies). |  |
| Intended date of implementation: | 1 September 2016 |
| Intended duration of policy: | Ongoing |
| Are there transitional arrangements associated with policy implementation? |  |
| List major data sources utilised to develop policy (for example, ABS catalogue number 3201.0). |  |
| Are there any other assumptions that need to be considered? |  |
| **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.* |