

Request for Costing an Election Commitment

Name of proposal:	Caring for the Bush Capital
Person requesting costing:	Shane Rattenbury MLA
Date of request:	16 October 2024
Summary of proposal:	To protect the natural environment of Canberra: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a Bush Capital Restoration Fund to fund landscape level habitat restoration, invasive species management and connectivity to protect vulnerable species. - Establish a robust, independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA).
Issue the proposal will address:	This proposal will address long term damage inflicted on our natural environment, lead restorative work to our natural environment and combat the dual threats of climate change and extinction, and improve compliance and enforcement through a more robust EPA.
Proposal's public announcement details (media release or policy statement published on a party website) ¹ :	2024 Initiative - Caring for the Bush Capital (greens.org.au)

What are the key assumptions that have been made in the proposal?

Note: The costing will be developed on the basis of information and assumptions provided in the costing request. The professional judgment of the Under Treasurer will determine whether these assumptions are adopted in the costing of the proposal.

Bush capital fund

The fund will be established in 2024-25 and will be operational from July 2025. Administration of the fund will be covered by existing resources.

The projects to be funded would mostly be on ground works. We have classified the expenditure as capital and included depreciation (based on average 30 year useful asset life).

Stronger EPA

There would be an investment of \$6.57m towards strengthening the EPA. This includes:

- \$5.74 million for an 10 FTE per year (1 executive level 2.4 position, 4 SOGC positions and 5 ASO6 positions from July 2025 to June 2028).
- \$0.75m in 2024/25 for consultancies, First Nations consultation, policy review and new structure/policy development.
- \$75,000 for Board remuneration from July 2025 based on payment of \$600 per meeting

¹ As per Part 2, section 5 of the *Election Commitments Costing Act 2012*

for 6 board members for 6-7 meetings per year.

What are the estimated revenue and operating costs each year (if available) and what are the capital requirements for this proposal and estimated costs each year (if available)?

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue^(a)					
Expenses^(a)	-750	-1,887	-1,940	-1,991	-6,569
Capital^(a)		-15,000	-15,000	-20,000	-50,000
Depreciation^(a)			-500	-1,000	-1,500
Offset - Expenses^(a)					
Offset - Capital^(a)		15,000	15,000	20,000	50,000
Full-time equivalent employees		10	10	10	

(a) A negative number indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses, depreciation or capital outflows. A positive number indicates an increase in revenue or decrease in expenses, depreciation or capital inflows. The expenses row is not to include depreciation costs.

Has any specific information or data been utilised in generating the proposal? Please provide links or attach information/data sources referenced.

No

Where relevant, is funding for the proposal to be demand driven or a capped amount?

A capped amount

Will third parties, for instance the Commonwealth or other State/Territories, have a role in funding or delivering the proposal? Does the proposal provide additional funding to, or redirect, any existing Commonwealth/State or Territory funding arrangements?

No

Will funding/the cost require indexation?

No

Who will administer the proposal?

EPSDD

How will the proposal be administered?

The Bush Capital Fund will be administered by EPSDD through reallocation of existing resources. Additional staff has been provided for the EPA. Supervision of these positions will be done within existing resources.

Is the proposal part of a broader package? If so, please identify the other elements of the package.

Yes. Other elements of the package that will be funded within existing resources are:

- Expand reserves by protecting places of high ecological value
- Create an ecological framework to protect nature within our reserves and across other

<p>lease types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build First Nations capacity and leadership to support joint environmental management of our reserves and waterways. <p>This initiative also links to the Caring for waterways and catchments initiative, as both are funded by Water Abstraction Charge revenue.</p>
<p>Has an allowance been made for expenses necessary to support the implementation of this proposal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If no, will the government agency be expected to absorb expenses associated with this proposal? – If yes, please specify the key assumptions.
<p>Yes, as above.</p>
<p>Will the proposal generate savings or offsets? If so, please quantify any savings or offsets.</p>
<p>The proposal is offset by Water Abstraction Charge (WAC) revenue.</p> <p>Current 2024-25 Budget forecasts estimate around \$174.6 million in WAC revenue over 2024-25 to 2027-28. Our Caring for Waterways and Catchments initiative includes \$56.89 million of WAC revenue as an offset. An additional \$50 million of WAC revenue has been included as an offset in this proposal.</p>
<p>Has the proposal been previously costed by an external (third) party? If so, will a copy of this material, including any assumptions, be made available to Treasury?</p>
<p>No.</p>
<p>What are the community impacts associated with the proposal? Who and how many people will be affected?</p>
<p>Canberrans will benefit from improved amenity in nature reserves and green spaces, fewer invasive species and healthier catchments and ecosystems. Community ParkCare volunteers will be better supported through a more comprehensive approach to weed management.</p>
<p>Are there any transitional considerations associated with implementation of the proposal? If so, how will they be managed?</p>
<p>No.</p>
<p>What is the intended implementation date of the proposal?</p>
<p>It is intended that the \$50m fund will be operational from July 2025. The Stronger EPA reforms would be in place from July 2025.</p>
<p>When is the proposal expected to be fully operational? Please provide details such as the start and end dates, the level of commitment during each period etc.</p>
<p>This initiative will be fully operational from July 2025.</p>
<p>Will the proposal cease, and if so, when?</p>
<p>No. It is anticipated that the fund and EPA staffing will be ongoing.</p>
<p>Is there any additional information relevant to this proposal?</p>
<p>No.</p>