



PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

NSW Parliament • Parliament House, Macquarie Street Sydney 2000

Referred by: Australian Labor Party **Proposal No:** C1365
Date Referred: 27/1/2023 **Date Published:** 20/03/2023
Proposal Title: Convert NPWS Field Officer General Operations to Field Officers
Cluster: Planning and Environment

General Government Sector Impacts

	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	2024-25 \$'000	2025-26 \$'000	4-year Total \$'000
Expenses (ex. depreciation)	-	268	534	847	1,648
Depreciation					-
Less: Offsets					-
Revenue					-
Net Operating Balance:	-	(268)	(534)	(847)	(1,648)

Capital Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Offsets					
Net Capital Expenditure:	-	-	-	-	-

Net Lending/(Borrowing):	-	(268)	(534)	(847)	(1,648)
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Total State Sector Impacts

Net Lending/(Borrowing):	-	(268)	(534)	(847)	(1,648)
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Notes and costing assumptions:

The policy proposes to convert all National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) Field Officer General Operations (FOGOs) positions to Field Officers Base Grade 1-2 (FOs Gr 1-2) within three years.

The salary of FO Gr 1-2 is higher than FOGOs. Therefore, the cost of the policy is equal to the increase in salaries from FOGOs to FOs Gr 1-2.

The policy states that the conversion will occur over three years. The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) advised that there are 66 budgeted full-time equivalents (FTEs) for FOGO positions from 2023-24, of which 26 are currently filled. Under a phased approach, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) assumes that all 26 existing staff would be transferred to FOs Gr 1-2 positions in the first year. The remaining 40 to be converted would be split equally between 2024-25 and 2025-26.

The total cost of the policy is \$1.6 million over the forward estimates (see *Assumptions*). The costs accumulate each year as more FOGOs get converted to FOs Gr 1-2. As these positions are permanent, there will be a budget impact equal to the difference between salaries beyond the forward estimates.

Notes and costing assumptions continued:

Assumptions

Salaries are escalated according to the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy, i.e., 3 per cent in 2023-24 and 2.5 per cent in 2024-25 and 2025-26.

DPE advised that the oncost rate in 2023-24 is 22.96 per cent. This increases by 0.5 per cent each year to account for increasing superannuation until 2025-26 as legislated by the Australian Government.

The following table provides a summary of the calculations made to estimate the cost of the policy.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<u>Number of FTE conversions</u>				
First year		26	26	26
Second year			20	20
Third year				20
Cumulative total		26	46	66
<u>Salary including oncosts (\$)</u>				
FOGO	54,399	56,260	57,901	59,589
FO Gr 1/2 Year 1	64,377	66,579	68,521	70,519
FO Gr 1/2 Year 2	66,002	68,260	70,251	72,299
FO Gr 1/2 Year 3	67,524	69,834	71,871	73,966
FO Gr 1/2 Year 4	70,673	73,090	75,222	77,415
<u>Cost of the policy (\$)</u>				
FTEs converted in the first year		268,303	321,100	373,812
FTEs converted in the second year			212,407	254,200
FTEs converted in the third year				218,599
Total		268,303	533,507	846,611

Background

NPWS FOs Gr 1-2 perform more complex tasks than FOGOs. For instance, FOGOs conduct basic maintenance and cleaning of park facilities and assets, operate and maintain minor plant and equipment, and report issues or incidents involving park visitors. On the other hand, FOs Gr 1-2 are expected to undertake a wider range of tasks in relation to maintenance and improvement of park facilities and assets, operation of plant and equipment, and search and rescue operations (subject to training and certification), among others.

Correspondingly, there are more requirements to qualify as a FO Gr 1-2 than a FOGO. These include the former having to be able to obtain a Medium Rigid licence (to drive trucks or buses) and to meet the requirements of a firefighting medical to undertake frontline firefighting roles.