

Head 78 — INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Intellectual Property will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2026–27	\$309.8m
Establishment ceiling 2026–27 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 182 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2026 reducing by four posts to 178 posts as at 31 March 2027.....	\$146.7m
In addition, there will be an estimated ten directorate posts as at 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2027.	
Commitment balance.....	\$16.0m

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Statutory Functions
Programme (2) Protection of Intellectual Property

These programmes contribute to Policy Area 6: Commerce and Industry (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).

Detail

Programme (1): Statutory Functions

	2024–25 (Actual)	2025–26 (Original)	2025–26 (Revised)	2026–27 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	184.7	192.5	195.6 (+1.6%)	206.6 (+5.6%)
				(or +7.3% on 2025–26 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to provide cost-effective and efficient systems for the registration and management of trademarks, patents, designs and copyright licensing bodies in Hong Kong.

Brief Description

3 The statutory functions of the Department involve:

- examining trademark applications, conducting registrability and opposition, invalidation and revocation hearings, maintaining the register of trademarks and making it available for public search;
- examining patent applications, granting standard patents after substantive examination, granting short-term patents followed by substantive examination if required, registering patents granted by the three designated patent offices, maintaining the register of patents and making it available for public search;
- examining design applications, maintaining the register of designs and making it available for public search; and
- examining applications for registration of copyright licensing bodies, maintaining the register of copyright licensing bodies and making it available for public search.

4 The registers of trademarks, patents and designs are all maintained in electronic format. The Department has been providing electronic searching, filing, payment and publication services in respect of registration of trademarks, patents and designs since 2003. Owners of registered rights or their agents can directly make changes to particulars of owners and agents of trademarks, patents and designs; apply for renewal of trademarks, patents and designs; register assignments and assents for registered trademarks and trademark applications; and register assignments for granted patents and patent applications as well as registered designs and design applications. These changes are updated on the Registries' records instantly. The electronic services have been well received, and were redeveloped into a New Integrated IT System in February 2019. In 2025, the proportions of electronic filings for trademark, patent and design applications were 89 per cent, 98 per cent and 79 per cent respectively.

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5 The key performance measures in respect of statutory functions are:

Targets

	Target	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Actual)	2026 (Plan)
<i>For trademarks under the Trade Marks Ordinance (Cap. 559)</i>				
issuing first letter				
for trademark applications				
during deficiencies checking stage				
within three months (%)‡	92	98	97	94
providing first response for trademark applications within two months (%)φ.....	97	99	98	97
providing second response				
for trademark applications				
within three months (%)Ω	80	88	84	82
delivering hearing decisions on trademarks within six months (%).....	97	100	100	97
<i>For patents under the Patents Ordinance (Cap. 514)</i>				
processing standard (re-registration) patent applications concerning minimum requirements within ten days (%)§	97	99	99	98
processing standard (original grant) patent applications concerning minimum requirements within ten days (%)§	93α	96	97	95
processing short-term patent applications concerning minimum requirements within ten days (%)§	93α	96	97	95
processing standard (re-registration) patent applications				
concerning formal requirements				
within four months (%)Ψ	94β	99	99	96
processing short-term patent applications concerning formal requirements within three months (%)Ψ.....	94β	100	99	96
<i>For designs under the Registered Designs Ordinance (Cap. 522)</i>				
processing design applications concerning minimum requirements within ten days (%)§	99	99	99	99
processing design applications concerning formal requirements within four months (%)@	94β	99	99	96

‡ Calculated from the date of payment of the prescribed fee.

φ Calculated from the date of the Trade Marks Registry's notice confirming receipt of all the required information for substantive examination.

Ω Calculated from the date of expiry of first opinion or from the date of applicant's reply to first opinion.

§ Calculated from the date of application to the date of issue of the first notice.

α Target will be raised from 92 per cent to 93 per cent as from 2026.

Ψ Calculated from the date of the Patents Registry's notice confirming that the minimum requirements are satisfied.

β Target will be raised from 93 per cent to 94 per cent as from 2026.

@ Calculated from the date of the Designs Registry's notice confirming that the minimum requirements are satisfied.

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Indicators

	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Actual)	2026 (Estimate)
<i>For trademarks under the Trade Marks Ordinance</i>			
applications received.....	33 149	37 491	35 300
applications successfully registered.....	28 835	30 285	29 600
first response issued for trademark applications.....	32 096	35 020	31 600
second response issued for trademark applications.....	4 645	4 388	3 800
hearing decisions issued.....	120	72	70
<i>For patents under the Patents Ordinance</i>			
applications for standard (re-registration) patents received.....	15 758	14 541	15 000
applications for standard (original grant) patents received.....	182	242	260
applications for short-term patents received.....	813	867	760
standard (re-registration) patents granted.....	10 037	8 542	7 700
short-term patents granted.....	659	701	650
<i>For designs under the Registered Designs Ordinance</i>			
applications received.....	2 228	2 168	2 000
designs registered.....	3 852	4 187	3 800
<i>For copyright licensing bodies under the Copyright Ordinance (Cap. 528)</i>			
applications received.....	2	0	0
applications successfully registered.....	1	0	0
applications for renewal of registration.....	6	6	6

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2026–27

6 During 2026–27, the Department will continue to meet the challenges associated with the projected rebound in trademark filings, developing the capacity of the original grant patent system, and enhancing the operation of the registries of patents, trademarks and designs.

Programme (2): Protection of Intellectual Property

	2024–25 (Actual)	2025–26 (Original)	2025–26 (Revised)	2026–27 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	84.5	85.8	82.3 (–4.1%)	103.2 (+25.4%)
				(or +20.3% on 2025–26 Original)

Aim

7 The aims are to promote awareness of intellectual property (IP) rights, to enhance the local IP protection regime and the reputation of Hong Kong in the protection of IP rights in order to attract investment and encourage innovation and creativity, to protect existing and new types of IP rights in line with international trends and standards, and to facilitate and promote the development of IP trading in Hong Kong. Particular attention is paid to providing support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to help them identify, protect, manage, exploit and commercialise their IP assets in Hong Kong and in the region, with the focus on promoting IP literacy, active prevention of IP rights infringement and capacity building.

Brief Description

8 This programme area involves:

- advising the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) on policies and legislation to strengthen protection of IP rights in Hong Kong;
- providing civil legal advice on IP matters to government bureaux and departments;
- advising SCED on relevant developments at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Trade Organization (WTO) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC);
- participating in consultations, negotiations and committees of experts leading to new or revised international IP rights standards; attending and participating in regional and international seminars, conferences, meetings, etc. on IP rights matters;

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- promoting IP services provided by Hong Kong professionals, facilitating the understanding of IP laws and systems in the Chinese Mainland by Hong Kong enterprises operating in the region;
- promoting the development of Hong Kong as a regional IP trading centre, and assisting SCED to implement support measures; and
- strengthening co-operation with counterparts in the Guangdong Province, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area), the Beijing Municipality and Chongqing Municipality on IP and related developments.

9 The Department has continued its territory-wide campaigns, viz. the “No Fakes Pledge” Scheme and “IPledge” Campaign to encourage pride in the selling and buying of genuine goods among Hong Kong retailers, tourists and local consumers. By the end of 2025, 13 trade associations with 1 769 retail merchants covering 7 018 outlets/online shops in Hong Kong participated in the Scheme. For the “IPledge” Campaign, the Department has made use of various reach-out activities to encourage the public to refuse to buy pirated and counterfeit goods.

10 The Department has continued to implement various initiatives to promote awareness of and respect for IP rights and to encourage innovation and creativity. It has collaborated with organisations of the right-holders and youth to organise and sponsor various events, such as the “Respect Intellectual Property” Campaign. In 2025, targeting the younger generation, the school visit programme covered 53 schools and 11 230 students, the interactive drama programme covered 173 schools and 54 337 students, and talks were held in six tertiary institutions.

11 SMEs have remained one of the prime targets of the Department’s promotion and education efforts. Through seminars, workshops and exhibitions organised by the Department or in collaboration with others, the Department has helped SMEs understand the importance of protecting their IP rights and raise awareness of innovation and IP management among them. These activities also support SMEs to explore potential IP solutions to further develop and expand their business, such as the types of IP that may be available for sale or exploitation in their target markets.

12 To promote IP trading, the Department has continued to work with the public sector, professional bodies, industry players and other stakeholders to implement measures under four strategic areas, namely enhancing the IP protection regime; supporting IP creation and exploitation; fostering IP intermediary services and manpower capacity; and pursuing promotion, education and external collaboration efforts. With a view to further strengthening SMEs’ manpower capacity in IP management and commercialisation, the Department continued to enrich the IP Manager Scheme PLUS training programme with enhanced breadth and depth in the content. The Department continued to offer free IP Consultation Service with the support of The Law Society of Hong Kong, and forge ahead with various promotion and public education efforts such as producing videos that highlight success stories and sponsoring training courses and workshops on IP related subjects.

13 The Department announced the results of the survey on professional and business services relating to IP trading/commercialisation in Hong Kong in December 2025.

14 To strengthen the training of IP talents in support of industry development, the Department collaborated with the Qualifications Framework Secretariat to launch practical teaching materials on IP for deployment by training providers in December 2025, benefitting personnel across 23 different industries.

15 To foster regional collaboration with the economies of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in promoting IP commercialisation, the Department, pursuant to the ASEAN – Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement framework, organised an ASEAN Session focusing on patent commercialisation at the Business of IP Asia Forum in December 2025. Over 200 participants, including representatives of IP offices and innovation and technology (I&T) authorities and sectors of the ASEAN Member States, took part.

16 On the copyright regime, following the completion of the public consultation in September 2024 to explore further enhancement to the Copyright Ordinance (Cap. 528) regarding the protection for artificial intelligence (AI) technology development, the Department is formulating a code of practice in respect of the relevant legal principles in consultation with stakeholders. The subsidiary legislation to (i) designate non-government-owned libraries, museums and archives that can be exempted from certain criminal liabilities under the Copyright Ordinance; and (ii) specify libraries, museums and archives eligible for certain permitted acts under the same ordinance and prescribe the relevant conditions for compliance came into operation respectively on 18 July 2025 and 1 January 2026.

17 On the trademark regime, the Department has continued to take forward preparatory work for the implementation of the international trademark registration system under the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks (Madrid Protocol) in Hong Kong, including preparing the related subsidiary legislation and adjusting the required information technology system.

18 On the patent front, with the agreement of the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), an expedited patent pre-examination service provided by the Shenzhen Intellectual Property Protection Center as a facilitation measure for cross-boundary IP protection benefiting Chinese Mainland patent applications filed by Hong Kong’s I&T sector started in June 2025. In addition, the pilot project on prioritising examination of qualified invention patent applications filed by Hong Kong applicants in the Chinese Mainland launched by the CNIPA in collaboration with the Department and the IP authorities of Guangdong Province and Shenzhen since 2023 was regularised on a standing basis on 1 January 2026.

19 On the front of the local registered designs regime, the Government launched a three-month public consultation on the review of the regime on 17 December 2025, followed by engagement sessions in January 2026.

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20 The Department has continued to promote the “patent box” tax incentive which reduces the tax rate for qualifying profits sourced in Hong Kong and derived from eligible IP assets (i.e. patents, plant variety rights and copyright subsisting in software) from 16.5 per cent to 5 per cent (effective since 5 July 2024) so as to encourage the I&T sector to engage in more research and development work and create more inventions with market potential for patent registration and commercialisation.

21 On 1 September 2025, the Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WIPO on Hong Kong’s participation in the WIPO Lex-Judgments database to share important IP case precedents of local courts so as to showcase to the international community the quality of our IP-related judicial judgments.

22 The Department supported the Hong Kong Productivity Council to establish a Technology and Innovation Support Centre in Hong Kong under a dedicated programme run by WIPO to provide innovators, SMEs, entrepreneurs and businesses with high-quality IP-related technology information and related services, thereby helping them create, protect, and manage IP rights for commercial exploitation and IP trading, and facilitate Hong Kong’s integration into national development. The Hong Kong Technology and Innovation Support Centre (HKTISC) officially commenced full operation on 22 December 2025.

23 The Department, in collaboration with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), launched an IP financing sandbox on 22 December 2025 to assist pilot sectors (particularly the technology sector) in leveraging IPs for financing with the support of the banking, insurance, valuation, legal and other professions. Three pre-launch training courses organised by the Department in collaboration with the banking industry organisation were provided to banking practitioners in the second half of 2025 to enhance the industry’s understanding of IP topics covering IP financing.

24 The key performance measures in respect of IP protection are:

Indicators

	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Actual)	2026 (Estimate)
engagements with stakeholders.....	152	157	157
speeches and presentations.....	88	89	89
engagements with the media.....	17	29	29
school visits [□]	67	53	53

□ Including school visits in physical and online modes.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2026–27

25 During 2026–27, the Department will:

- continue to provide policy, legal and technical advice to CEDB on enhancing Hong Kong’s IP regime to ensure that it will meet the actual needs of Hong Kong and keep pace with international developments;
- continue to work with stakeholders to develop and promote Hong Kong as a regional IP trading centre;
- implement a series of measures to facilitate and promote IP financing in Hong Kong, notably –
 - (a) supporting HKTISC to provide local small and medium I&T enterprises with patent evaluation based on national standards and launching a two-year pilot programme to subsidise patent valuation as a reference for credit financing;
 - (b) continuing collaboration with CEDB and HKMA in running and reviewing the IP financing sandbox;
 - (c) making preparations for nominating local enterprises to compete for the China Patent Award; and
 - (d) continuing to provide IP training to banking practitioners.
- support CEDB to amend the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) regarding IP tax deduction arrangements to promote IP trading in Hong Kong following the trade consultation;
- formulate a code of practice in respect of relevant legal principles pertinent to protection for AI technology development by reference to international development and in consultation with stakeholders;
- continue to keep in view the filings under the new patent system notably the caseload and the filing trends to ensure its smooth operation;
- continue to develop and promote the original grant patent system such as seeking ways of enhancing its user-friendliness and attractiveness, and also enhancing the substantive examination capacity of the Patents Registry;
- consolidate views collected from the patent agent sector and widen the consultation to engage other stakeholders to plan for the introduction of regulatory arrangements for local patent agent services;

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- continue to support the implementation of the facilitation measures for cross-boundary IP protection for expediting examination of Chinese Mainland patent applications filed by Hong Kong's I&T sector as referred to in paragraph 18 above;
- continue to forge ahead with the preparatory work for implementing the Madrid Protocol in Hong Kong and strive for the implementation of the international trademark registration system as soon as possible;
- continue to explore with the Chinese Mainland authorities on extending relevant international IP treaties to Hong Kong and enhancing facilitation measures for cross-boundary IP protection;
- continue to take forward the review of the registered designs regime and formulate a proposal on updating the regime following public consultation;
- continue to work with stakeholders and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to promote Hong Kong's competitive advantages in IP trading and IP professional services to the Chinese Mainland and overseas enterprises through trade missions, seminars, publicity programmes and the annual Business of IP Asia Forum;
- continue to support the business community in strengthening their IP protection, management and commercialisation in the Chinese Mainland (including the Greater Bay Area) through the Guangdong/Hong Kong Expert Group on the Protection of IP Rights and other appropriate channels;
- in collaboration with relevant Chinese Mainland IP authorities, to organise a delegation of Hong Kong IP professionals to participate in a business matching session in the Chinese Mainland in the second quarter of 2026;
- continue to support the Hong Kong Productivity Council in operating the HKTISC;
- engage the Vocational Training Council to establish and operate a two-year IP Academy Pilot Programme to deliver institutionalised, structured and recognised IP professional training programmes;
- continue to organise promotion and education activities, in particular for SMEs, with emphasis on IP protection, management and commercialisation;
- continue to disseminate information through the Internet on the IP systems in the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao;
- continue the outreach effort to young people on IP protection and encourage them to actively explore and innovate through school visits and promotion activities;
- continue collaboration with stakeholders to strengthen and publicise the "No Fakes Pledge" Scheme and "I Pledge" Campaign to promote the selling and buying of genuine products; and
- continue to play a proactive role in the APEC and the Trade-Related Aspects of IP Rights Council of the WTO, and, through such institutions, provide appropriate technical assistance to developing and least-developed economies overseas.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2024–25 (Actual) (\$m)	2025–26 (Original) (\$m)	2025–26 (Revised) (\$m)	2026–27 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
(1) Statutory Functions	184.7	192.5	195.6	206.6
(2) Protection of Intellectual Property	84.5	85.8	82.3	103.2
	269.2	278.3	277.9 (–0.1%)	309.8 (+11.5%)
				(or +11.3% on 2025–26 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

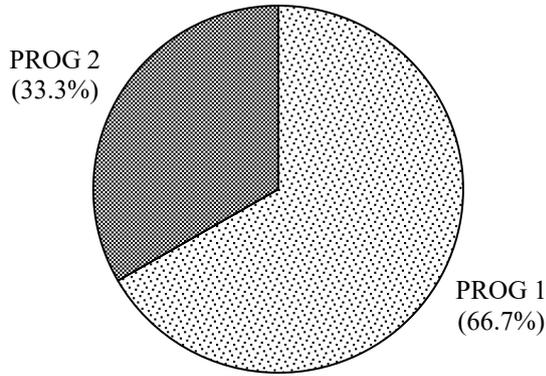
Provision for 2026–27 is \$11.0 million (5.6%) higher than the revised estimate for 2025–26. This is mainly due to the increased requirements in general departmental expenses, salaries and personnel related expenses for enhancing the capacity of the Department to follow through the patent reform, partly offset by a net decrease of three posts under this Programme in 2026–27.

Programme (2)

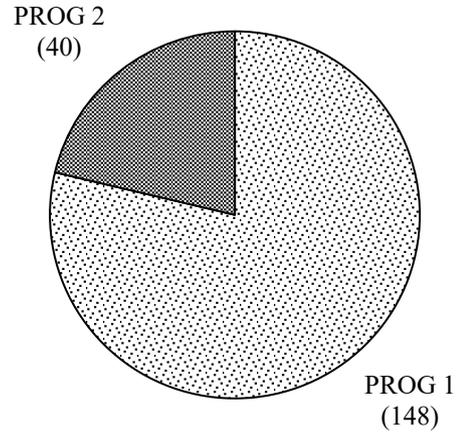
Provision for 2026–27 is \$20.9 million (25.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2025–26. This is mainly due to the increased requirements in general departmental expenses, salaries and personnel related expenses for enhancing the capacity of the Department to underpin Hong Kong as a regional IP trading centre as well as the expenses in relation to the operation of HKTISC in providing the new patent evaluation services, coupled with establishing and operating an IP Academy Pilot Programme, partly offset by a net decrease of one post under this Programme in 2026–27.

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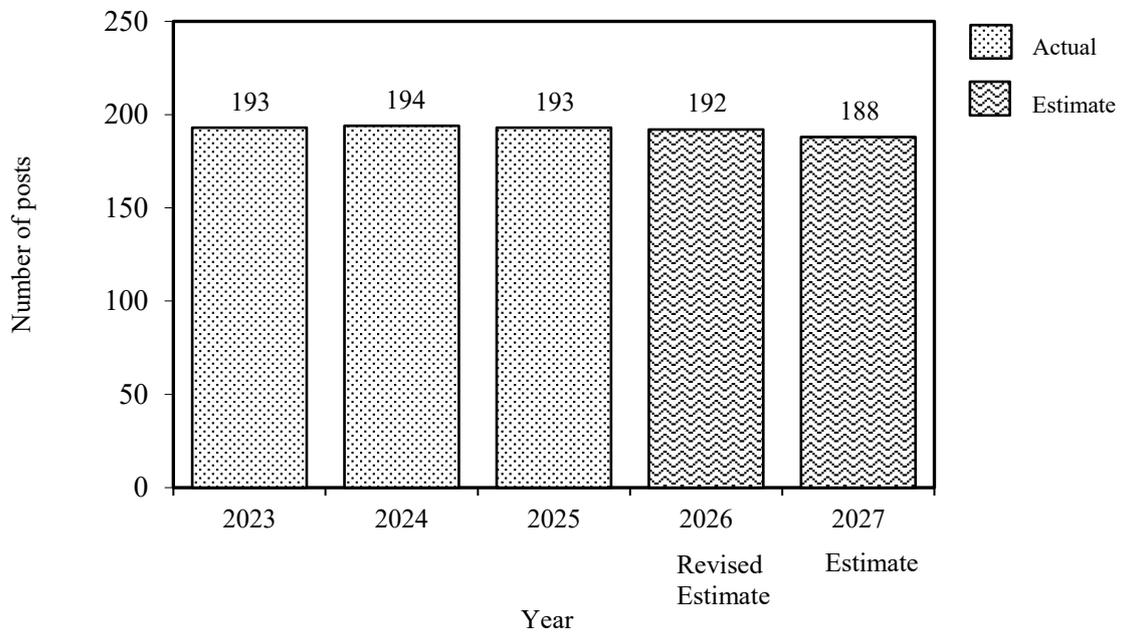
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2026-27)*



*Staff by programme
(as at 31 March 2027)*



*Changes in the size of the establishment
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2024–25	Approved estimate 2025–26	Revised estimate 2025–26	Estimate 2026–27	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	269,212	278,283	277,946	305,817
	Total, Recurrent.....	269,212	278,283	277,946	305,817
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	—	—	—	4,000
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	—	—	—	4,000
	Total, Operating Account	269,212	278,283	277,946	309,817
	Total Expenditure	269,212	278,283	277,946	309,817
		269,212	278,283	277,946	309,817

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2026–27 for the salaries and expenses of the Intellectual Property Department is \$309,817,000. This represents an increase of \$31,871,000 over the revised estimate for 2025–26 and \$40,605,000 over the actual expenditure in 2024–25.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$305,817,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Intellectual Property Department. This represents an increase of \$27,871,000 (10.0%) over the revised estimate for 2025–26. This is mainly due to the increased requirements in general departmental expenses, salaries and personnel related expenses for enhancing the capacity of the Department to underpin Hong Kong as a regional IP trading centre as well as the expenses in relation to the operation of HKTISC in providing the new patent evaluation services, coupled with establishing and operating an IP Academy Pilot Programme.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2026 will be 192 posts. It is expected there will be a net decrease of four posts in 2026–27. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2026–27, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$146,708,000.

4 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2024–25 (Actual) (\$'000)	2025–26 (Original) (\$'000)	2025–26 (Revised) (\$'000)	2026–27 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries.....	147,820	149,594	145,536	150,452
- Allowances.....	3,433	3,601	3,051	3,209
- Job-related allowances.....	—	1	1	1
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	372	336	272	198
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	13,260	14,611	14,652	15,745
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	88,824	98,140	102,334	126,212
Other Charges				
- Publicity and educational programmes	15,503	12,000	12,100	10,000
	269,212	278,283	277,946	305,817

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2025	Revised estimated expenditure for 2025–26	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Operating Account</i>						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	801	Pilot Patent Valuation Support Scheme#.....	16,000	—	—	16,000
		Total	16,000	—	—	16,000
			16,000	—	—	16,000

This is a new item, funding for which is sought in the context of the Appropriation Bill 2026.