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# NHI numbers still not finalised

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**The cost of implementing the ANC's proposal for a national health insurance scheme from 2012 has not yet been calculated by the National Treasury, says a senior official.**



*Photograph by:*

"It's not in the numbers now," Chris Loewald, deputy director general for economic policy in the Treasury, told a conference of the Bureau for Economic Research in Somerset West on Thursday.

He said the real cost was likely to be a lot lower than some of the figures circulating in public discussion.

"We don't know what the NHI looks like and we don't know what it is going to cost," he said.

And he assured the audience of business leaders that Pravin Gordhan, the finance minister, would not allow the adoption of any policy the country could not afford.

"The minister feels very strongly that these things have to be done in a sustainable way," he said.

Loewald told PoliticsLIVE on the sidelines of the meeting that Treasury committees were running models to test the likely cost of various designs for a national health insurance scheme, but he said these numbers had not been finalised.

Olive Shisana of the Human Sciences Research Council, who is leading a team working on an NHI design, has estimated that the NHI would cost an additional R11-billion on top of the existing health budget in the first year, which is currently scheduled to be 2012.

The proposal released by the ANC and currently under discussion in government calls for implementation over 14 years.

The proposal is for a compulsory scheme, but with individuals still free to buy private insurance and to visit doctors and hospitals that do not participate in the NHI.