Friends of Parks and Nature Grant Program 2026-27 Guidelines

Applications close at 11.59pm, Wednesday 4 November 2026 (ACDT)

1. Introduction

To further support the substantial work undertaken by Friends of Parks and Nature (FOPN) groups across South Australia's national park reserves and other important conservation-based initiatives, the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water has approved the *Friends of Parks and Nature Grant Program 2026-27*.

The *Friends of Parks and Nature Grant Program* offers grants of up to $15,000 per application (GST exclusive) and member groups may submit more than one grant application.

The *FOPN Grant Program* is focused on conservation-based activities including the protection of biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage and European heritage activities across national parks, reserves and the broader landscape where the outcomes are supported by relevant habitat restoration or biodiversity plans and are consistent with the objectives of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1972. Applications may also include the purchase of minor plant/equipment and other materials/services that support a group's project and conservation objectives.

Grant funding is available for activities and projects spanning up to 18 months in duration, with projects to commence upon receipt of funds.

2. Grant Program Parameters

Examples of project activities that may be funded:

- Pest plant and animal control, protective fencing, revegetation, habitat restoration or maintenance, wildlife monitoring and survey work in coastal systems, inland waterways and wetlands, track maintenance, Aboriginal or European heritage site maintenance/protection/restoration. Interpretive signage must be approved by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) staff (or the relevant landowner).

- Conservation project proposals aligned with the protection of natural heritage should focus on those that protect threatened species, conserve native vegetation and address threatening processes including pest plant and feral animal impacts. Project proposals that enhance environmental and species resilience to HPAI (Bird Flu) and the Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) are also encouraged.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), safety training or equipment, hand tools, secure storage and monitoring equipment.
- A fuel reimbursement may be included as part of the project budget, in accordance with the NPWS Volunteer Fuel Subsidy procedure i.e. the first 300km travelled is the individual's own cost after which a motor vehicle fuel allowance rate of $0.35 cents per kilometre to a maximum claim of $300.00 per vehicle per year.

The following conditions apply to projects:

- Groups will need to demonstrate that the project activities and budget items sought in their application are necessary for the success of the project/activity, contribute to the group's capacity and are linked to the project outcomes.

- Projects must be supported by an approved plan, e.g. park management plan, regional landscape plan, biodiversity plan, fire management plan, species recovery plan and supported by the relevant Regional Parks & Wildlife Manager.

Please discuss your project proposal with your NPWS Liaison Ranger or associated agency staff member (e.g. DEW Heritage, Landscapes SA) as early as possible to ensure a relevant plan is referenced in the application and ensure the necessary approvals and supporting documentation can be obtained within the grant application timeframe.

The following items will not be funded:

- Large plant or equipment such as a ride on mower, large trailer, tractor.
- Amenity and beautification projects (due to ongoing maintenance requirements).
- Boundary and barbed wire fencing.
- Non-indigenous vegetation.
- Laptop computers, software, software licences or smartphones. Please contact the DEW Grants Officer if you would like to discuss your particular project needs.
- Purchase of goods for competition, prizes, gifts, vouchers, alcohol or giveaways.
- General food and accommodation expenses with some limited exemptions. Please contact the DEW Grants Officer to enquire during your project planning phase.
- Directional signage (responsibility of NPWS) and publication of books. **Please note:** interpretive signage is acceptable, and pamphlets, guides or on-park information sheets may be funded in some instances (subject to approval).
- Shooting and shooting signage, explosives, trapping or fumigation methods for pest animal control (this does not include 1080 baiting).
- Any other action or activity determined by the Assessment Panel to be inappropriate or an unsuitable use of the funds within the context of park or conservation management.
- Funding will not be provided for projects that have already been completed. Grants cannot be used to reimburse costs incurred before the funding agreement is executed.

Project location

Projects/activities can either be located on-park i.e. land protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, *Wilderness Protection Act 1992*, *Marine Parks Act 2007*, *Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005,* or off-park on other land tenure. Please note that the relevant landholder's current permission is required as part of the application.

3. Eligibility and Assessment

Eligibility

To be considered eligible for funding:

- Applicant groups must be a current financial member registered with Friends of Parks and Nature Inc. and have received endorsement from a Regional Parks and Wildlife Manager (and relevant landholder or representative if undertaken off-park) as part of the application.

- Applicant groups must be incorporated or sponsored by an incorporated organisation, such as a local government authority, Local Action Planning Group, or Friends of Parks and Nature (FOPN) Inc.

- Where a sponsor is required, the sponsorship arrangement must be confirmed in writing and attached to the application. Applicant groups must provide their sponsor with sufficient information about the project and **allow a minimum of two weeks** for the sponsor letter to be prepared once requested. **Sponsor letters must be signed and uploaded with the application.**

- Applicant groups must provide a current public liability insurance certificate covering the activities proposed in the project and a safe work environment for volunteers. **Note**: FOPN member groups who conduct their projects under the approval of a NPWS staff member are covered by SAFA insurance when working under the Volunteer Safety Procedure (VSP).

- Applicant groups must not have any outstanding grant acquittals unless prior approval has been obtained via a grant variation request.

- To meet the requirements of the Department of Treasury and Finance groups must demonstrate an in-kind or co-contribution to their project of at least 50% of the funding amount being sought. This contribution can be via volunteer hours, other funds or other in-kind contributions e.g. third party support with freight or cartage costs.

- Project applicants must have obtained **ALL** necessary endorsements or approvals from either the relevant National Park region and/or local government and/or private landowner for the proposed project to be undertaken, **prior** to an application being submitted. If legislative approvals or permits are required to carry out the proposed works these must also be attached to the application (e.g. CASA license for drone use, Native Veg license for seed collection, EPA approvals for soil affecting activities, Landscape Board approval for projects occurring near

wetlands or floodplains, Aboriginal heritage requirements where construction / earthworks are involved at sensitive sites).

Assessment

Grant applications will be assessed by an Assessment Panel, comprising FOPN Inc. Board members and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) staff. DEW will provide the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water with a list of FOPN Board endorsed projects for approval. Successful grant applications will be announced by the Minister. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome.

The Assessment Panel will consider the contribution of the project/activity in terms of the following assessment criteria:

A. Protection and/or restoration of land, biodiversity, environment or heritage sites (either Indigenous or European).

The extent to which the project contributes to the above through on-ground works or follow up on previous work.

B. Community Benefit

The extent to which the project benefits the community, including fostering partnerships and community involvement in environmental and biodiversity management, education and conservation activities.

C. Value for money

The proposed budget represents good value for money and includes realistic costs that are directly attributable to the project. Applicants must provide a clear justification and supporting evidence for all requested budget items. Volunteer contributions form part of this assessment criterion and must be quantified, clearly described, and demonstrably linked to the delivery of project activities.

D. Equitability

To help ensure funding is distributed fairly across regions and volunteer groups, applications from areas or communities that have received little or no funding in recent years may receive a higher score against this criterion.

4. How to Apply

Written applications must be lodged electronically on the DEW SmartyGrants website **by 11:59pm Australian Central Standard Time (ACST) on Wednesday 4 November 2026**.

PLEASE NOTE: The grant round is open for 6 weeks. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

New applicants will need to create an account via the online portal in order to lodge their application. Information contained in your application will form the basis for the grant agreement document. Please contact us early if you require assistance with completing the application form where technology, literacy, disability or English as a second language may

be barriers to the lodgement of your application. Applicants will receive a direct notification email from SmartyGrants that the application has been lodged successfully.

5. Notification of outcomes

Applications will be checked for eligibility and assessed competitively against other applications. An email will be sent to advise applicants of the outcome. This process is expected to take at least 6 weeks.

6. Grant agreements, reporting obligations and insurance

Successful applicant groups ('grantees') will enter into a Grant Agreement with DEW which outlines the conditions of the funding, including the following requirements:

Project Reporting

Acquittals: The project/activity duration is up to 18 months from the time of funding payment. A final grant acquittal and project report will be required from an authorised group representative upon completion of the project. A form template for acquittal reporting will be linked to your application via Smarty Grants.

Variations: In the case that events beyond the group's control delay the project/activity (such as unseasonal weather conditions, bushfire, flooding etc.), groups may apply to DEW for a variation to the grant agreement, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A variation form will be linked to your application via Smarty Grants.

Insurance and Safety

Applicants must provide a current copy of their public liability insurance. Applications that do not provide this documentation will be considered ineligible. To maintain the health and safety of all volunteers, activities are guided by the Work Health and Safety Act 2012. Volunteers must be provided with:

- A safe work environment and safe systems of work.
- Information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for them to work safely. This includes induction, task-specific training, emergency procedures, and ongoing supervision appropriate to the risks involved.
- Safe equipment and resources required for the work.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required, and training in its use.
- Consultation on WHS matters, including the opportunity to raise safety concerns and participate in safety processes.
- Protection of both physical safety and psychological health while undertaking volunteer duties.

Note: external contractors who are engaged as part of this grant program by volunteer groups on parks and reserves, for example a weed spray operator, must be managed by DEW/NPWS staff, not volunteers, as per DEW policy guidelines.

7. Grant Payment Process

Two separate processes exist for groups to receive their grant payments depending on their incorporation status and these are detailed below.

i) **Incorporated Groups**: Once the grant agreement has been signed by both parties and returned to DEW, groups will be asked to issue DEW with a tax invoice to trigger the payment process.

   ***Please note*:**

   - Grantees must be registered as vendors on the government's accounts payable system **prior to** a tax invoice being lodged. Vendor creation forms are available upon request from the Grants Officer.
   - All grantees are required to have an Australian Business Number **or** have completed an Australian Tax Office 'Statement by a Supplier' form.

ii) **Unincorporated Groups**: Where groups are Sponsored by another incorporated organisation (such as FOPN Inc.), the Sponsoring body will issue the tax invoice to DEW.

8. Contact Us

If you wish to discuss a plan for your grant project please contact your NPWS liaison ranger/DEW staff member. If your group does not have an allocated liaison ranger/DEW staff member (for groups that cross multiple regions or work off park) or for any other grant related questions please contact the DEW Grants Officer at Susan.Taite@sa.gov.au or call 0439 870 378 during office hours.