

# National Parks and Wildlife Service Friends of Parks and Nature Grant Program Guidelines

**Applications close at 5pm, Thursday 16 October 2025 (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 2025-26*.

The *Friends of Parks and Nature Grant Program* offers grants of up to \$15,000 per application (GST exclusive), with a total of up to \$700,000 available in 2025–2026. Groups may apply for more than one grant using a separate application for each.

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 etc, or 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 outcomes.

Grant funding is available for activities and projects spanning up to 18 months in duration, with projects commencing when payment is received.

## 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, 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).
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), safety training or equipment, hand tools, secure storage and monitoring equipment.
- Where member groups apply for fuel reimbursement as part of their project budget, the NPWS Volunteer Fuel Subsidy policy criteria will apply i.e. first 300km travelled is the individual's cost, then the motor vehicle allowance rate of \$0.35 cents per kilometre to a maximum of \$300.00 per/vehicle per year can be claimed.

### 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 and/or contributes to the group's capacity, and the funding requested matches the project activities and 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/or supported by the relevant Regional Parks & Wildlife Manager.

***Please discuss your project proposal with your NPWS Liaison Ranger or associated agency staff member as early as possible to ensure a relevant plan is factored into the application and ensure 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, subscriptions or smartphones.
- 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 or on-park information sheets may be funded in some instances.
- 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 unsuitable use of the funds within the context of park or conservation management.

**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 located on other land tenure. Please note that the relevant landholder's 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 group registered with Friends of Parks and Nature Inc., and have received endorsement from a Regional Parks & Wildlife Manager (and relevant landholder if undertaken off-park) as part of the application.
- Applicant groups must be incorporated, or otherwise Sponsored by an incorporated organisation such as local government, Landscape Board, Local Action Planning group, FOPN Inc., etc. This sponsor relationship must be supported in writing and attached to the application.
- Applicant groups must not have outstanding grant acquittals more than six months past their grant agreement deadline, unless prior approval has been obtained.

- 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 can include volunteer hours, other funds or other in-kind contribution 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 be attached to the application (e.g. CASA license for drone use).

## **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 recommended projects for approval. Successful grants 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 on-ground 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 budget demonstrates that the application represents good value for money, including realistic costs that are directly related to the grant proposal and a clear justification for requested budget items.

### **D. Equitability**

To help ensure funding is shared fairly across different regions and volunteer groups, projects in areas or communities that haven't received support in recent years may be preferred.

## 4. How to Apply

Written applications must be lodged electronically on the [DEW SmartyGrants](#) website by **5:00pm Australian Central Standard Time (ACST) on Thursday 16 October 2025**. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Applicants will need to create an account via the online portal in order to lodge their application. Information contained in your application forms the basis for the grant agreement document, should your project be successful. Please get in contact early if you require assistance with completing the application form where technology, literacy, disability, or English as a second language may be barriers to your application being lodged. You will receive notification via email that your application has been received.

## 5. Notifications of the outcome

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 one month.

## 6. Grant agreements and payments

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

### Project Reporting

- 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 template form for acquittal reporting will be linked to your application via Smarty Grants.
- In the case that events beyond the group's control delay the project/activity (such as unseasonal weather conditions, bushfire, COVID-19 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 and available in Smarty Grants.

**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 staff, not volunteers, as per DEW policy guidelines.

### Insurance and Safety

FOPN member groups will be eligible for injury and public liability insurance cover by the state government insurer, South Australian Government Financing Authority. To maintain the health and safety of all volunteers, activities are guided by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, and all volunteer activities must be undertaken complying with the DEW Volunteer Safety Procedure. Please note, in accordance with the DEW Volunteer Safety Procedure, this insurance coverage is only available for activities approved by a NPWS liaison ranger. Journey to and from the activity is not covered.

## Grant Payments

**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. Grantees will need to be registered as vendors on the government's accounts payable system **prior to** a tax invoice being lodged. All grantees are required to have an Australian Business Number **or** have completed an Australian Tax Office Statement by a Supplier form.

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

Please contact us via [DEWVolunteers@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWVolunteers@sa.gov.au) if you have questions or require assistance with the payment process.

### Please note

If you have any questions regarding your grant project please contact your NPWS liaison ranger. If your group does not have an allocated liaison ranger (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](mailto:Susan.Taite@sa.gov.au) or call 0439 870 378 during office hours.