Friends of Parks and Nature 2026-27 Grants Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are answers to a number of frequently asked questions relating to the Friends of Parks and Nature (FOPN) Grants program. Grant Guidelines are also available to provide assistance with preparing your application.

Project Details

1. **How should we word our project title?**

   Provide a concise project title, limited to 10 - 15 words, which describes what your project is aiming to achieve and the general location, e.g. 'Feral Olive control in the Waite Conservation Reserve'.

2. **Where can my project be located?**

   Projects/activities can be located on parks and reserves 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 on other land tenure (Note: the Landholder's permission is required as part of the application).

3. **Do I need to contact my National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) Liaison Ranger or District Ranger prior to submitting an application?**

   Yes. You will need to contact your NPWS Liaison Ranger to confirm your project is supported by NPWS prior to submitting your application form. A key element of the assessment process is evaluating the proposed project against priorities identified in the appropriate regional park plans. With early communication, the Liaison Ranger can assist you with your project planning and application, ensuring you obtain the relevant approvals within the grant application timeframe.

4. **What if my group works across multiple parks, or outside of parks (such as Council land) and doesn't have a specific DEW Liaison Ranger?**

   A number of FOPN groups operate across multiple parks and/or land tenure across the state. Groups who operate across multiple parks and do not have a liaison ranger are advised to contact the Volunteer Programs and Community Partnerships Branch Grants Officer on 0439 870 378 or email Susan.Taite@sa.gov.au. Groups who operate on private land must ensure the project has approval from the regional Landscape Board, that the Landowner Support Form is signed by the legal landholder and both forms are uploaded with the application. Forms are available for download via links on the SmartyGrants platform.

5. **If a project involves property adjoining a park, do you need to show the landowner's contribution?**

   Yes, this is an important component of an application for cross-boundary or off-park projects. The landowner adjoining the park might be keen to contribute to a weed management or habitat restoration project located on both park and their property, and provide funds or loan machinery. Applications should also describe the identified conservation outcomes across the different land tenures, and the relevant plan the project links to. As noted above, a signed Landowner Support Form must be provided with your application.

6. Can we apply for funding for a project that has already been completed?

No. Friends of Parks and Nature Grants do not provide retrospective funding. This means funding cannot be awarded for projects that have already been completed, or to reimburse costs that have already been incurred before funding approval. Projects must be proposed activities that will commence after funding has been awarded and any required funding agreements have been executed.

7. What types of activities can be included in a Friends of Parks and Nature Grant?

Projects that may be funded can include, but are not limited to, the following:

Pest plant control
Animal control
Protective fencing
Revegetation
Habitat restoration / maintenance
Wildlife monitoring and surveys
Threat management
Access management
Erosion control

- European or Aboriginal heritage site maintenance, protection and restoration
- Track maintenance
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Safety training or equipment
- Hand tools

- Training courses (may include conference attendance)
- Botany (e.g. herbariums or plant identification)
- Fuel subsidy
- Miscellaneous items will be considered in the context of the activity

8. Are pest animal control activities allowed under the grants program e.g. fumigation, shooting, or baiting?

Groups interested in applying for grants for projects that include these types of activities must discuss their proposal with NPWS regional staff, who will consider a range of issues including WHS and industry requirements, appropriate qualifications, experience and equipment for the specific activity, and whether this activity is able to be supported by the region. If you are proposing to undertake these activities outside of a park location, please contact the Volunteer Programs and Community Partnerships Branch Grants Officer on 0439 870 378 or email Susan.Taite@sa.gov.au.

Applicant Details

9. Our group is currently undertaking a project funded by a previous grant round. Are we able to apply?

Yes, provided there are no overdue reports e.g. Acquittals.

10. Our group currently has overdue reports for previous grant projects. Are we able to apply?

No. Applications from groups with unapproved overdue reports will not be considered. All overdue reports will need to be submitted and accepted prior to any new applications being deemed eligible.

11. Can our group submit more than one application?

Yes. If there is more than one project you would like to carry out, you can submit a separate application for each, provided they are distinct from each other and you have the capacity to deliver them within the 18 month period.

12. Can our group partner with another group?

Yes. Your application should clearly outline the nature of the partnership and the respective functions each group will undertake as part of the proposed project. These details should be provided as a supporting document and uploaded as part of your online grant application. One of the groups needs to be clearly identified as the lead group for correspondence, reporting and overall responsibility for the project and the application should be submitted in the name of the lead group.

13. Who should be the Primary Contact person for our application?

This will be the person who will coordinate the application and, for successful projects, will receive the Grant Agreement and subsequent communication. They will also be responsible for reporting on the project.

14. How do we find out our group's ABN, GST and Incorporation status?

You can find all of these details on the ABN Lookup website.

15. Our volunteer group is not incorporated – can we apply?

Yes. Unincorporated groups are encouraged to apply; however, they must be sponsored by an incorporated organisation. As the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) can only enter into funding agreements with incorporated entities, unincorporated groups must secure sponsorship from an incorporated organisation willing to take responsibility for the project's legal and financial obligations. Examples of suitable sponsoring organisations include Friends of Parks and Nature Inc., local government authorities and Local Action Planning Groups. If the application is successful the funding agreement must be signed by both the applicant group and the sponsoring organisation. Grant funds will be paid to the sponsor who will manage the funds on behalf of the applicant group and be responsible for submitting financial acquittals. These acquittals must be signed by representatives of both the applicant group and the sponsoring organisation. The online application form requires applicants to provide the details of their sponsoring organisation and upload a signed letter confirming the sponsor's support.

16. How does having an Australian Business Number (ABN) affect our grant?

If your group does not have an ABN your grant funding will be subject to withholding tax of 47%. To avoid this you will need to complete and return a 'Statement by a Supplier' form with your Grant Agreement. You can read further information here: ATO Website. The form can be accessed via a link in SmartyGrants.

Budget and Timeframes

17. Can we include fuel costs in our project budget?

Where member groups include fuel subsidies in their project budget, the NPWS Fuel Subsidy criteria will apply i.e. the first 300km travelled is the individual's cost, then a motor vehicle allowance rate of $0.35 cents per kilometre to a maximum of $300.00 per vehicle can be claimed to a maximum of $2000 per member group. If you are including fuel costs, please specify this in your application and list details in your budget. Full details of the NPWS Fuel Subsidy are available via a link in the grant application.

18. Can we include the purchase of PPE, hand tools and equipment to undertake on-ground work and demonstrate our in-kind volunteer hours through working bees?

Yes. Groups are welcome to apply for training, PPE, hand tools and other minor plant and equipment to assist in the group's ongoing activities. The in-kind volunteer hours may be reflected through planned working bees.

19. Can we purchase equipment to help us undertake on-ground work?

Groups are encouraged to borrow or hire equipment, however, purchase of equipment and tools may be considered if it can be demonstrated that this is essential to the delivery of ongoing specified works. Please note that your group will be responsible for operating, maintenance, secure storage and any insurance costs associated with the equipment.

20. Are groups required to provide in-kind or a co-contribution to match the funding amount?

Yes. To meet the Department of Treasury and Finance requirements 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. The value of volunteer hours will be calculated at the Volunteering SA&NT rate for 2025 of $50.50/hr (South Australia).

21. How does Goods and Services Tax (GST) affect our grant?

Please include the 'embedded' cost of GST within your project budget proposal to ensure you are applying for enough funds to cover the project expenses. Those groups who are registered for GST can add GST when invoicing DEW for their grant funds.

Example Budget: If your group needs 10 sets of work gloves @$10 each, 10 shovels @$20 each, and 10 sets of safety glasses @$5 each, the difference between GST registered and not registered groups is shown below:

Groups NOT registered for GST	Groups registered for GST
10 x gloves ($10 each inc. GST) = $100	10 x gloves ($10 each inc. GST) = $100
10 x shovels ($20 each inc. GST) = $200	10 x shovels ($20 each inc. GST) = $200
10 x safety glasses ($5 each inc. GST) = $50	10 x safety glasses ($5 each inc. GST) = $50
Total submitted on grant invoice = **$350**	Total submitted on grant invoice = **$385** ($350+$35 GST)

22. What if we don't spend all funds that were paid to us?

If you have excess funds at the end of your project you will need to report on actual funds spent in your final report. You can also seek a Grant Variation to use any remaining funds for an additional purpose e.g. by extending your project deliverables. If you anticipate having unspent funds, please contact the Grants Officer to discuss your options.

23. When do works need to be completed by?

Works need to be completed within 18 months of receipt of funding. Your project completion date will be determined from the project timeline within your application.

24. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I may not be able to complete my project within the agreed timeframe. What can I do?

We understand that unexpected events can sometimes affect project timelines. If your project is delayed please notify the Grants Officer as soon as possible. Applicants may request a project variation through SmartyGrants. All variation requests will be assessed, and applicants will be notified of the decision by email.

Supporting Documents

25. What supporting documents do I need to upload?

- ✓ A signed Ranger Support Form
- ✓ A signed Landowner Support Form (where applicable)
- ✓ A signed letter from the Sponsoring Organisation (where applicable)
- ✓ Contractor quotes and other estimates to support your budget
- ✓ Project supporting documentation e.g. maps, project plans, species lists

26. What approvals do I need to attach?

Some projects may require further approvals/permits under legislation. If additional approvals are required to carry out the proposed works, please ensure that these have been uploaded where required in the application form on SmartyGrants.

Examples of required project approvals/permits may include:

- Seed collection permits under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (Section 49) - a permit is required to collect native plant material from public land.
- Water affecting activities under the *Landscapes South Australia Act 2019* (Section 104) - if the project is near or involves watercourses/wetlands/creeks then it may need a 'water affecting permit'. It is your group's responsibility to apply to the regional Landscapes Board for necessary permits before commencing any works. Speak to your Liaison Ranger first for further advice in relation to this.
- Land/soil affecting activities control policies under the *Landscapes South Australia Act 2019* (Section 33) - if the project involves altering the state of the land or soil (e.g. the potential for erosion by removing weeds without follow up revegetation) then it may need a permit. Projects that potentially affect the land need to be referred to the relevant regional Landscapes Board for advice.
- Civial Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) licenses and registration for any intended drone use or associated activities. See further information here: Drone Rules.

Other

27. How will applications be assessed?

Grant applications will be assessed by an assessment panel comprising of FOPN Inc. Board members and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) staff. The FOPN Board will provide the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water with a list of recommended projects for approval.

28. Will the Friends Group receive the funds directly?

Incorporated groups will provide an invoice to DEW and receive their funds directly.

Unincorporated groups will ensure their Sponsor provides DEW with an invoice and the funds will be paid directly to the sponsor organisation on their behalf.

29. When will we be informed whether our proposed project has been successful?

Applicants will be advised in January 2027 whether or not their applications were successful.

30. Will there be another round of funding in 2026-27?

No. Only one grant round is offered per year.

More information

For grant enquiries, please contact the **Grants Officer** at:

Susan.Taite@sa.gov.au or telephone 0439 870 378.

Further information can be found on the Friends of Parks and Nature webpage.