

Practical tips for applying for a Friends of Parks and Nature Grant.

Before you start

- Make sure your Friends group is a current financial member of Friends of Parks and Nature. Eligibility is checked before applications are assessed.
- Read the guidelines and FAQs first to avoid investing time in a project that may not be eligible.
- Discuss your idea with your **liaison ranger** (on-park projects) or **landscape board officer** (off-park projects) before developing the application.

Project title and project description

- Keep project titles to 10 words or fewer. Do not include your group name in the title. Long titles flow through to grant agreements and other documents, creating administrative issues.
- Clearly explain:
 - What you will do
 - Why it is needed
 - What outcomes it will deliver
 - When activities will occur
- Include a project timeline with:
 - Objectives
 - Activities
 - Outputs/deliverables
 - Timing and milestones

Keep your project focused

- Avoid "catch-all" projects trying to tick every box
- If it is a heritage project, make it a heritage project
- If it is a restoration project, focus on restoration
- The panel advised that trying to bundle too many unrelated activities can blur the purpose of the application and weaken assessment outcomes
- If you genuinely have several distinct projects, consider submitting multiple applications instead

Tell the project's story

- If the project expands on previous work, explain that history
- Link the application to earlier projects, habitat corridors, restoration sites or ongoing conservation programs
- The assessment panel wants to understand the context and progression of the work

Gain approval early

- Obtain project endorsement before lodging
- On-park projects require support from a **liaison ranger**
- Off-park projects require support from a **landscape board officer**
- A signed support form must be uploaded with the application
- A common mistake is uploading unsigned forms. Applications are checked and unsigned forms will render an application ineligible for assessment

Co-contribution requirements

- Applications require a minimum 50% co-contribution to the funding amount sought
- Volunteer labour can be accounted for at a rate of \$50.50 per hour (2026 hourly rate)
- Include:
 - Volunteer hours
 - Planning and administration time
 - Site preparation
 - Monitoring
 - Follow-up work
 - Other in-kind contributions from third party organisations.
- The co-contribution demonstrates commitment, capability and volunteer involvement.

Align with recognised plans

Strong applications demonstrate alignment with plans such as:

- Park management plans
- Biodiversity action plans
- Regional plans

- Species recovery plans
- Landscape board priorities
- Regional conservation objectives

Projects should be supported by an established conservation or management plan rather than being standalone ideas.

Budget tips

- Upload supporting quotes wherever possible
- Use current quotes, not quotes that may be a year or more old
- Include GST in all budget calculations. If you exclude GST, you may not receive enough funding to cover actual project costs
- Track expenditure throughout the project using a spreadsheet or similar system

Additional supporting information

Applications can be strengthened by including:

- Maps
- Species lists
- Site photos
- Other evidence that helps explain the project and its benefits.

Eligible project examples

Examples include:

- Ecological restoration
- Trail maintenance / upgrades
- Wildlife monitoring and surveys
- Interpretive signage
- Cultural heritage restoration
- Seed collection and propagation
- Pest plant and animal control
- Citizen science projects
- Habitat creation and enhancement
- Community engagement projects

What generally won't be funded

Examples included:

- Ride-on mowers, tractors and large equipment purchases
- Large trailers
- Amenity and beautification projects
- Boundary and barbed-wire fencing
- Non-native plantings
- Computers, phones and software licences
- Competition prizes, vouchers and alcohol
- General food and accommodation expenses (unless specific exemptions apply).
- If in doubt please contact the Grants Officer (Susan.Taite@sa.gov.au)

Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed against four main criteria:

1. Environmental benefit
2. Community benefit
3. Value for money
4. Equitability (ensuring funding is spread across regions and groups).

Common reasons applications may be unsuccessful

- Not talking to a ranger or landscape officer early enough
- Missing signatures
- Missing support forms
- Out-of-date quotes
- Insufficient explanation of volunteer contribution
- Projects relying on a single person to deliver them
- Sponsor letters requested too late and / or not submitted

For unincorporated groups

- Sponsor letters must be obtained before submission
- The session recommended allowing **at least 10 days before applications close** to secure sponsorship approval
- A short project summary is generally sufficient to support the sponsorship process

The strongest applications

Stronger applications are those that:

- Have a simple, clearly defined purpose
- Align with recognised regional conservation priorities
- Have Liaison Ranger/Landscape Officer support
- Signed Landowner Support
- Clearly demonstrate environmental and community benefits
- Include realistic budgets backed by quotes
- Thoroughly document volunteer contributions
- Submit all supporting documentation correctly the first time