



Nature
Foundation

Grants Program Guidelines



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About the program

Nature Foundation is an apolitical not-for-profit foundation that invests in conserving, restoring and protecting South Australian landscapes, flora and fauna to ensure their survival. We aim to lead the way in sustainable nature conservation.

Nature Foundation undertakes a regular grants program, funded by donations from our generous supporters. Grants are offered in a number of different [grant categories](#). Our grants program funds research that contributes to the conservation of South Australia's biodiversity and habitats, and supports university students and researchers in their work and careers. All research funded through the grants program aligns with and contributes to [our vision and mission](#).

Nature Foundation has been offering research grants to postgraduate students since 2003. The creation of a formal process for distributing funds to Honours and PhD students has seen Nature Foundation award 434 grants in the field of biological sciences to a value of \$1.84 million dollars to universities and other research institutions between 2003 and 2022.

Our grants have funded a diverse range of research projects focussed on the protection and restoration of South Australia's native wildlife and habitats. A selection of research reports from previous research is available in our online [research paper library](#).

Applications for funding will only be considered during specified grant rounds. The opening and closing dates of Nature Foundation grant rounds will be published on our [how to apply webpage](#).

These grant program guidelines outline key information for applicants including: grant proposal requirements, grant categories, key priorities, eligibility and the grant application process. Any issues not covered by these guidelines will be considered by the Nature Foundation Nature Conservation Committee on a case by case basis.

Grant proposal requirements

To ensure that we award grants to research projects that align with our vision and strategic goals, grant proposals submitted to the Nature Foundation grants program must meet a number of requirements. In addition, successful applications will need to meet any specific requirements of the particular [grant category](#) that is being applied for.

All grant funded projects must:

- be compatible with the [vision and mission](#) of the Nature Foundation,
- enhance the reputation of the Nature Foundation,
- have clear aims (what you hope to achieve) and S.M.A.R.T.¹ objectives (how your aim will be achieved), and
- relate to nature conservation in South Australia.

¹ S.M.A.R.T – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time constrained

Required outcomes

Individual projects must demonstrate capacity to deliver on **at least one** of the following outcomes:

1. Support the objectives of [Nature Foundation nature reserves](#),
2. Answer a question posed by Nature Foundation,
3. Investigate areas of research interest on Nature Foundation reserves.

If a request is for **multi-year funding**, the project must also:

4. Show how the money can successfully leverage additional funding from other organisations.

Criteria checklist

Successful grant applications will demonstrate a capacity to address **at least six** of the following twelve criteria:

- Develop an understanding of the ecological and landscape environments of [Nature Foundation nature reserves](#) or [Water For Nature](#).
- Enhance conservation actions on [Nature Foundation nature reserves](#).
- Inform management of threatened flora and fauna species present on [Nature Foundation nature reserves](#).
- Underpin Nature Foundation decision making within the organisation.
- Support the new generation of researchers via Honours, Masters and PhD grants.
- Understand the ecology of an important plant or animal species.

The [Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists](#) has its own defined objectives aimed at progressing nature science in Australia and applications for this Award do not need to address the above criteria.

Grant categories

Nature Foundation's grants program provides funding in the following categories:

- Grand Start Grants Program for Honours, Masters and PhD students
- Nature Foundation Scientific Expedition Foundation RL & GK Willing Grant for Honours students
- Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship for Masters and PhD students
- Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists
- Research Project Grants

Not all categories of grants may be on offer during each grant round.

Honours Year Grand Start Grants Program

Each Honours Year Grand Start Grant provides up to \$2,000 as an operating grant for 1 year to assist an Honours student undertaking research. Projects may be field-based or involve non-field-based research such as geographic information system or remote sensing related projects or data analysis.

PhD/Masters Grand Start Grants Program

Each PhD/Masters Grand Start Grant provides up to \$3,000 per annum for a maximum of 3 years as an operating grant to assist a PhD or Masters student undertaking research. Each grant recipient must reapply on an annual basis to receive new grants in subsequent years. A decision on whether to continue funding a scholarship will be based on the performance report for the previous year, submitted by the grantee, the comparative merit of other grant applicants, the alignment of the research with Nature Foundation's science and conservation goals, the success in leveraging additional funding from other organisations, and the availability of funds.

Nature Foundation Scientific Expedition Foundation RL & GK Willing Grant

The Nature Foundation Scientific Expedition Foundation RL & GK Willing Grant is an annual grant that provides up to \$2,000 for 1 year to support an Honours student.

The student's research must focus on advancing the understanding of:

1. trends in the abundance and distribution of native populations of South Australian fauna and flora; or
2. soil, water, geology or climate where it will affect abundance and distribution of native populations of South Australian fauna and flora.

This grant was initiated in 2017 as a partnership between Nature Foundation and the [Scientific Expedition Foundation](#).

Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship

The Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship provides up to \$12,000 per annum for up to 3 years to support a postgraduate student (PhD or Masters) at an Australian University.

The student's research must align with Nature Foundation's vision and strategic goals and be:

1. high quality scientific research that makes a significant contribution to the conservation of South Australia's biodiversity; or
2. in the field of biological science with a view to the resolution of an environmental problem or the conservation of South Australian wildlife.

This scholarship was initiated in 2002 by a generous donation from Mrs Marjory Edwards to establish a perpetual scholarship in conservation biology.

Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists

The Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists includes a medal for academic excellence, along with a \$3000 grant to a successful applicant to support their emerging careers. It is envisaged that the grant would be used to:

- support a research program, including purchase of equipment for field expenses,
- attend a conference or important seminar, and/or
- visit another lab or potential future collaborator.

The selection committee will favour research projects that are based in field work, or which utilise robust field data, aligning with the successful career of Professor Mike Bull. Work in these fields would be viewed favourably:

- Long term research programs, including field data
- Conservation biology
- Parasitology
- Population ecology
- Herpetology
- Behavioural ecology

The project or research focus of the recipient must be able to demonstrate a benefit to nature science or conservation in Australia. Applications are encouraged from across Australia (or more broadly) where the research focus is to the benefit of nature science in Australia.

This Award was established through the [Professor Mike Bull Research Fund for Early Career Nature Scientists](#) to continue Mike's wonderful legacy in animal behaviour, ecology and conservation. Mike was an outstanding scientist and was well known and revered for his mentorship of students.

Research Project Grants

Research Project Grants are provided to support projects that assist South Australian wildlife in the natural environment. Research proposals that align with any of our potential research projects are strongly encouraged. Other specific research priorities may be identified for a particular grant round. Researchers must be Australian based and have demonstrated credentials, but need not be university based.

Community Grants

Community Grants are provided to education-based programs involving the interlinking of conservation and science in association with Nature Foundation nature reserves or programs.

Key priorities

Grant proposals that align with our key priorities and/or our list of potential research projects are likely to achieve a higher rate of funding success. The key priorities for Grand Start, Research Project and Community grant categories are projects that:

- align with our [Science Strategy](#), and
- inform the management of [our nature reserves](#), or
- contribute to our Conservation Programs.

Our list of potential research projects is broadly themed across nature reserve management and conservation of threatened flora and fauna.

Other specific priorities may be identified for a particular grant round and these will be listed on our website during that grant round.

Grants offered in partnership with third parties (i.e. the Nature Foundation Scientific Expedition Foundation RL & GK Willing Grant, the Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists, and the Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship) have specific requirements which are outlined in the description for each grant category.

Science Strategy 2018-2023

Nature Foundation has developed its [Science Strategy 2018-2023](#) to deliver the best possible science based outcomes for conservation in South Australia and directly underpin the decision making of the Foundation.

The Science Strategy outlines the following broad research priorities for 2018-2023:

1. The ecological and landscape issues pertaining to [our nature reserves](#).
2. Ecological issues pertaining to either threatened or over-abundant species.
3. The material advancement of conservation and/or restoration of South Australian terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems.
4. To provide ecosystem resilience towards climate change.
5. To improve the connection between community and nature through activities including ecotourism, citizen science and/or other engagement methodologies.
6. Water - especially including but not limited to the Murray River.

Conservation programs

Our conservation programs are diverse and focus on conserving native flora and fauna on our nature reserves, while managing threatening processes. We have developed a list of potential research projects broadly themed across nature reserve management, and conservation of threatened flora and fauna. The projects on this list will assist in the informed management of our nature reserves, and wetlands and floodplains where we work with government and community. We are open to further development and collaborative refinement of these research projects and welcome partnerships with university students and researchers.

Our nature reserves

Nature Foundation currently owns and manages/co-manages the following seven South Australian [nature reserves](#) for conservation purposes:

- Witchelina Nature Reserve: 421,000 hectares near Marree and Lake Torrens
- Hiltaba Nature Reserve: 78,000 hectares located in the Gawler Ranges on Eyre Peninsula
- Watchalunga Nature Reserve: 92 hectares located at the mouth of the Finniss River on Fleurieu Peninsula
- Tiliqua Nature Reserve: 85 hectares located north east of Burra
- Para Woodlands Nature Reserve: 320 hectares near Gawler, co-managed with the Department for Environment and Water
- Murbpook Nature Reserve: 360 hectares on the River Murray between Blanchetown and Morgan
- Geegeela Nature Reserve: 102 hectares near Frances in south-east SA.

Each nature reserve has a management plan which outlines conservation actions to be undertaken.

If field-based research is undertaken on Witchelina or Hiltaba Nature Reserves, accommodation at the property may be available free of charge or at a reduced cost to researchers who have received Nature Foundation grants, subject to availability.

What can be funded

Nature Foundation funds individuals or organisations to contribute to nature conservation outcomes through research projects and community education-based programs in line with the [grant proposal requirements](#). Grants are generally intended to support operational activities. **Appendix 1** provides descriptions of the types of activities that can be funded, and also provides details of activities that will not be funded.

Who can apply

Unless otherwise specified, the following applicant eligibility requirements apply to Nature Foundation grants:

- Grand Start Grants program: Honours, Masters and PhD students enrolled at an Australian university
- Nature Foundation Scientific Expedition Foundation RL & GK Willing Grant: Honours students enrolled at an Australian university
- Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship for Masters and PhD students: Masters or PhD student enrolled at an Australian University
- Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists: Early career nature scientists (late PhD or early post-doctoral position candidates). Applicants from Australia are eligible, and international applicants are also eligible so long as their research is beneficial to nature science in South Australia. Only Australian research institutions are eligible as hosting organisations
- Research Project Grants: Australian based researchers with demonstrated credentials (not necessarily university based)
- Community Grants: South Australian community members and organisations.

Applicants must have a registered ABN or must nominate a payee (the person or organisation to which the grant will be paid, and who will be responsible for managing and acquitting the funds) with a registered ABN. Typically students will be named as the applicant, and their university will be nominated as the payee.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Applications will not be accepted from applicants, organisations or sponsored organisations that:

- have outstanding obligations/acquittal reports for projects previously funded by Nature Foundation
- are for-profit organisations (with the exception of educational institutions) or private companies
- are Commonwealth, State, or Local Government departments and agencies (except as a sponsor).

How to apply

Applications for funding will only be considered during specified grant rounds. Generally a grant round will open in March each year and, only if funds are available, a second round may open later in the year. Grant rounds will be open for approximately 6 weeks before closing for the 4 week application assessment process. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application after the assessment process is complete.

The opening and closing dates of Nature Foundation grant rounds, and the proposed grant categories on offer for that grant round, will be published on our [Applying for Grants webpage](#).

There is one application process for all grant categories, with the exception of the [Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists](#).

Grant application process for applicants (all grant categories except Mike Bull Award)

1. Read the Nature Foundation Grants Program Guidelines (this document) to familiarise yourself with our grants program and to determine whether you meet the eligibility criteria for funding.
2. Familiarise yourself with our [key priorities](#). We recommend that you read our:
 - [Science Strategy 2018-2023](#)
 - Potential research projects that will inform our conservation programs
 - [Nature reserves](#), including management plan summaries if available (for research proposed on Nature Foundation nature reserves)
3. Download the Nature Foundation Grants Program Application Form from our [How to apply webpage](#).
4. Complete the application form in full, making sure you:
 - address the [grant proposal requirements](#),
 - demonstrate how your proposal aligns with the [key priorities](#), and
 - sign the application as the applicant.

For Honours, Masters and PhD student applications, your application form must be signed by your supervisor(s). If applicable, the host organisation (or payee) must also sign the application form. Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

5. Email a **signed, digital version** of the completed application form to info@naturefoundation.org.au with 'Student Research Grants Program Application' and the applicant name in the subject heading by the closing time and date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Required documentation

- If you are applying for the Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship Grant, you must attach the following to your application:
 - Your academic record and/or details of professional experience, and
 - A supporting statement from your university supervisor or departmental head (maximum 1 page).

Grant application process for applicants (Mike Bull Award)

1. Read the Nature Foundation Grants Program Guidelines (this document) to familiarise yourself with our grants program and to determine whether you meet the eligibility criteria for funding.
2. Familiarise yourself with the Mike Bull Award objectives, guidelines and application process by reading the information provided in this document.
3. Prepare your application including:
 - a brief covering letter of 1-2 pages outlining:
 - i. your achievements to date
 - ii. how the award would further your scientific career
 - iii. how your research objectives align with the Mike Bull legacy
 - iv. indicatively how you would spend the grant funds
 - a curriculum vitae.

You can also request for a referee to submit a referee statement of up to 150 words in support of your application. Please state in your covering letter if this has been requested.

4. Email a **signed, digital version** of your covering letter and curriculum vitae to info@naturefoundation.org.au with 'Grants Program Application – Mike Bull Award' and the applicant name in the subject heading by the closing time and date. Ensure any referee statements are also provided by the closing time and date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Additional documentation

- You may be required to provide the following upon request from Nature Foundation:
 - A letter or other evidence of support, if working with a particular organisation or landholder, and/or
 - Evidence of any scientific permits, ethics approvals or other permits/approvals required for your project.

Note

- The funds sought by applicants generally exceed those available. As a result, you may not be successful in obtaining a grant or you may not be offered the full amount of money requested.

Grants and the GST

- It is strongly recommended that applicants seek independent legal and financial advice to determine all taxation obligations before submitting an application.
- Successful applicants that are registered for GST will have their grant grossed up by 10% to offset the GST payable on the grant. Organisations that are not registered for the GST will not have their grant grossed up, and must include GST amounts in their application. If successful, organisations cannot have their Grant Agreement transferred to another body because of GST registration.

How applications are assessed

Applications for funding are reviewed in a two-stage process by Nature Foundation staff and members of the relevant committee based on these Guidelines.

Stage one – application screening

Once the grants round has closed, Nature Foundation staff will screen all applications to check that:

- the [applicant is eligible](#) to apply,
- the application meets the [grant proposal requirements](#) outlined in these Guidelines, as well as any specific requirements for each individual [grant category](#) applied for, and
- the application has been completed in full and all essential information has been provided.

Only applications that meet the minimum Stage one requirements will progress to Stage two.

Stage two – assessment against criteria

Applications that have progressed to Stage two are assessed by all available members of the relevant committee. If required, the Committees may nominate non-Committee members with appropriate expertise to assist with the assessment process.

For most grant categories, the relevant committee is the Nature Foundation Nature Conservation Committee, together with the Nature Foundation Conservation Programs Manager.

Applications for the [Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists](#) will be assessed by the Committee for the Professor Mike Bull Fund. Applications for this Award will be assessed against the objectives of the Professor Mike Bull Fund.

In assessing your application at Stage two (for all grant categories with the exception of the Mike Bull Award) the following criteria will be considered:

Key priorities Only for Grand Start, Research Project and Community Grant categories	Alignment of the proposed project with the key priorities for Nature Foundation grant funding (i.e. strong alignment with key priorities versus weak alignment with key priorities).
Conservation outcomes	The contribution of the proposed project to long-term conservation outcomes and the capacity of the project to meet the outcomes sought (i.e. very high value conservation outcomes versus very low value conservation outcomes).
Scientific rigour	The level of scientific rigour in the proposed project (i.e. robust and appropriate methods versus inappropriate methods).

Project and technical feasibility	The likelihood that clearly stated aims and S.M.A.R.T. objectives will be achieved within stated timeframes.
Applicant ability/capacity	The ability and capacity of the applicant (person(s) and/or organisation) to carry out the proposed project.
Value for money	The extent of value for money given the direct benefits; the costs proposed are reasonable and realistic; level of complementary funding/in-kind support; and cost of comparable projects.
Whole program funding distribution	The extent to which funding the project contributes to an equitable allocation of funding across key priorities and South Australia.

A list of projects proposed for funding will be recommended by the Nature Conservation Committee during each grant round based on the funds available at the time of assessment. The Nature Foundation Board will consider the recommendations from the Committee and approve the successful projects to be funded for each grant round.

Notification of applicants

If your application is successful

Successful applicants will receive written notification from Nature Foundation. You will then receive an agreement detailing the terms and conditions of the funding provided.

All applicants will be required to sign the agreement and comply with its conditions, which will include requirements to:

- report on how you have spent the money provided (grant acquittal)
- provide a final report (and progress report(s) for multi-year grants) on the outcomes from the funded project
- provide Nature Foundation with a copy of any published work related to the funded project
- complete a short Media Report with photographs for potential use by Nature Foundation
- provide a brief presentation about the project at a meeting, AGM, conference or similar, if requested to do so by Nature Foundation
- acknowledge the financial support of Nature Foundation in all related printed material and public statements/presentations
- enable Nature Foundation to access information and data developed by the funded project
- have/be covered by public liability insurance.

For university and research institution based applicants, intellectual property will be managed in accordance with the host organisation's intellectual property policy. Applicants independent of a university or research institution will need to come to an agreement with Nature Foundation regarding intellectual property.

Payment will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement. Generally funding will be provided to the applicant or payee in advance of the funded activities being undertaken, however there is a requirement that any unused grant funds be returned to Nature Foundation. You are required to keep receipts for all purchased items and may be asked to provide copies to Nature Foundation to support records of your expenditure. For multi-year grants, funding will be phased, with a progress report required prior to the release of further funds.

Nature Foundation will:

- maintain a current file for each funded grant
- monitor the progress of grant activities
- acknowledge all grant recipients and their research projects in its Annual Report
- publish research project final reports on its website.

If your application is unsuccessful

All ineligible or unsuccessful applicants will receive written notification from Nature Foundation. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to contact Nature Foundation for feedback regarding their application.

More information

For further information on the guidelines or to discuss your project or application, contact Nature Foundation or see our website.

Phone: +61 (08) 8340 2880

Email: info@naturefoundation.org.au

Website: www.naturefoundation.org.au

Grants webpage: www.naturefoundation.org.au/what-we-do/science-research/research-grants

Appendix 1

What can be funded

Nature Foundation grants are generally intended to support operational activities. The Nature Conservation Committee together with the Nature Foundation Board will have the final say on what can be funded. The table below describes the types of activities that can be funded; however this is not an exhaustive list.

Activities	Description
Deliver a research program / research project	<p>This funding is directed to short-term programs / projects (of 1-3 years duration). These may be new or continuing. Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• transport / travel (vehicle allowance, hire car, fuel, intrastate or interstate flights, ferry, boat hire) to / from / during field work• accommodation• food / meal allowance• consumables (e.g. field / laboratory)• wages / salary for direct project time (for Research Project Grant Category only)• scientific analysis including laboratory analysis (e.g. tissue / genetic)• contractors / professional services (e.g. for laboratory analysis, coxswain)• materials for field work (e.g. enclosure construction)• subscription to satellite service for fauna tracking• housing animals• report production including posters.

Activities	Description
Purchase equipment	<p>These grants are to purchase equipment so the applicant is better able to undertake its work. Funding can be used to purchase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • software and hardware* • program / project supplies and equipment • communication equipment • equipment and resources for field work / volunteers • equipment and technology for monitoring / surveys (e.g. radio tracking, video cameras, microphones, camera traps). <p>Applications must include details about how often the equipment will be used, and who can access the equipment.</p> <p>If equipment is purchased by a student applicant, unless otherwise agreed, that equipment will remain the property of the university or other research organisation with the intention for it to be made available to future researchers. Nature Foundation may request the return of any equipment purchased with grant funding.</p> <p>*Not-for-profit organisations should consult with Connecting Up (www.connectingup.org) regarding their eligibility for donated software/hardware or for discounts before applying for funds for these items.</p>
Provide support to an early career nature scientist (i.e. Mike Bull Award)	<p>Activities that support the career of the Mike Bull Award for Early Career Nature Scientists recipient, for example to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support a research program, including purchase of equipment for field expenses, • attend a conference or important seminar (including registration fees, transport / travel, accommodation), and/or • visit another lab or potential future collaborator.
Deliver a community event / project / program	<p>Community events, projects and programs should promote people’s participation and inclusion in nature conservation.</p> <p>Events are to be held in South Australia and grants may be provided to cover the cost of venue hire, equipment hire or purchase, materials and/or catering.</p>
Provide learning and skill development opportunities for volunteers or members of a community organisation	<p>Projects related to nature conservation that complement the organisation’s goals will provide learning and skills development opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisations to provide members with the knowledge and skills they need so the organisation is better able to achieve its objectives • volunteers that will assist them in their volunteering role. <p>Examples of eligible items include: payment of training/provider fees, including travel costs associated with the provider delivering training in remote areas; purchase of textbooks and other learning resources required e.g. participant handbooks, learner guides.</p>

What is not funded

The Nature Conservation Committee together with the Nature Foundation Board will have the final say on what is not funded. Nature Foundation grants will not fund the following; however this is not an exhaustive list:

Core operational expenses including:

Ongoing expenses to conduct your services such as:

- administration fees to the applicant's host organisation (payee)
- wages / salary, rent, purchase or lease of land, lease of vehicles, insurance, telephone, internet
- core operational staff – e.g. chief executive, administration staff, accounting staff
- training for paid staff
- existing debts or shortfalls
- police checks / DHS screening
- marketing and promotion of the organisation or existing services
- ongoing costs of programs and services

Duplication of funding including:

- research projects
- items, projects, programs or equipment that are already funded or are the core responsibility of other state and commonwealth government departments

Other:

- wages / monetary reimbursement for time for students if that student is the applicant
- personal pursuits, or hobbies
- funds to distribute to other bodies
- retrospective funding for any activity
- activities that will be implemented interstate or overseas (with the exception of the Mike Bull Award)
- fundraising activities, prizes, competitions or donations
- overseas facilitators or speakers
- international airfares (with the exception of the Mike Bull Award)

The following items are generally not funded but may be considered based on the assessment of merit:

- participation in interstate events (e.g. to present at a conference) (with the exception of the Mike Bull Award).