# Read relevant documents

## Funding guidelines

The funding guidelines outline which projects can be funded through the Volunteering Innovation Fund, and the process involved. Read the Funding Guidelines thoroughly to check that your project is eligible. The guidelines may change every round, so make sure you read them each time you are considering applying.

## Application form

The application form collects information for projects applying to the fund. Application forms can change every round. Make sure you read each question carefully. Start planning how you can answer all questions on the application form to demonstrate how your project aligns with the fund’s objectives. This may require further research, planning and making connections. You may like to start by writing your answers in a separate document to review and refine.

## Auspice information

If you are not eligible according to the funding guidelines, there is an opportunity to have your project supported by another organisation. This is called auspicing. If your application is being auspiced, you must include the auspice organisations details in the relevant section. For more information, see *Fact Sheet: Auspice of Applications*.

# Contact the fund team

Parks Victorian and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) are here to help. We can support you to check that your project aligns with the objectives and give you helpful hints. There is a central hotline (1300 865 386) and [email](mailto:VolunteeringFund@parks.vic.gov.au) for the Innovation Fund, and regional staff or land managers can also assist. If you are already in contact with local Parks Victoria or DELWP staff, you can contact them directly to discuss your application.

# Gather supporting documents

The application process requires you to provide documents. The documents necessary depend on your project and are outlined in the funding guidelines. Make sure you can provide all of the supporting documents required. Your application may be not be eligible or could score poorly if documents are not provided. Supporting documents include:

## Quotes

If your application includes costs (for goods, services, contractors etc.) you may be required to provide a quote. Parks Victoria has procurement policies and procedures that outline the minimum quotation requirements. These include:

* If an item costs less than $2,000 (incl. GST) you need to provide one written quote
* If an item costs between $2,000 and $50,000 (incl. GST) you need to provide two written quotes.

Make sure you provide the correct number of quote/s when submitting your application. It is important to have accurate quotes because if successful projects have costs more than quoted, there is no extra funding to help you cover these costs.

Where possible:

* At least 1 of the quotes should be sought from an Aboriginal business or Social Enterprise.
* Ask suppliers to demonstrate environmentally sustainable business practices.

When getting quotes, make sure that cost to provide the quote (request for quote process) is covered by the supplier, rather than you or your organisation (the customer).

### Part-funded by partner organisations

If your application is part-funded by another organisation, you still need to follow the Parks Victoria procurement processes (for all contributing organisations). It is Parks Victoria’s responsibility to ensure Parks Victoria procurement policies are followed. It is the other contributing organisation’s responsibility to make sure their procurement policies are adhered to. Refer to your partnering organisation, to make sure you are also following their policies.

## Australian Business Number (ABN)

All applicants must provide a copy of their ABN. You can save a pdf version from here <https://abr.business.gov.au/>

## Crown Land activities

### Primary Land manager support

If you are submitting an application for any works on Crown Land, you need support from the primary land manager. In most cases this will be the Parks Victoria Area Chief Ranger. Where the project is in a:

* jointly managed park, this must include support from the Traditional Owner Corporation. You can find a list of jointly managed parks here: <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/managing-country-together>
* committee of management area, this must include support from the applicable Parks Victoria or Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning representative

Support can be shown in the way of a letter or email.

If you are unsure how to contact your Area Chief Ranger, please contact the Volunteering Innovation Fund Team so connect you.

### Cultural heritage

All projects that disturb the ground (i.e. digging, excavating, trenching) must undertake a cultural heritage assessment and seek permission before starting. Ground disturbance includes activities such as tree planting and installing drainage.

If a cultural heritage assessment is needed, it will only need to be undertaken if the project is successful (not beforehand, during the application process). The cost for cultural heritage assessments and permissions are the applicant’s responsibility and should be factored in to the overall project costs.

### Traditional Owner engagement

Parks Victoria works in partnership with Traditional Owners. Applicants are encouraged to look at Traditional Owner Country Plans where available and consider projects that align with Traditional Owner objectives. Where appropriate, successful applicants will be expected to engage with Traditional Owners prior to projects starting. Conversations will be brokered by Parks Victoria after notification of project success.

## Insurance

Proof of insurance coverage is not required with applications. If a project is successful, applicants are required to provide proof/ effect and maintain public liability insurance cover for at least $10,000,000.

## Other supporting documentation

Take advantage of the opportunity to provide supporting documentation and provide plans, photos and letters of support from your community (community groups, local businesses, Rotary clubs, Progress Associations etc). Please keep documents to a maximum of seven only.

# Tips and tricks

## Be prepared

Do not leave applications to the last minute. Spend the time planning and writing the application to specifically target the fund’s objectives. Ask someone else to proof-read your application.

## Target your application

Make sure your application tells the story from start to finish. Describe the background behind the project and any specific events or issues. Set the scene and link the project you are applying for with your group’s priorities and the fund’s objective.

Illustrate the benefits that will be achieved with the project and state how they align with your group’s strategic priorities and the fund’s objectives. All applications will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria. Ensure that you address how your project will meet each of them clearly.

## Write a draft

Type and save your application in a Word document before copying and pasting into the online application form. This reduces the risk of losing work due to internet connection issues and can also help with grammar and proof-reading.

## Proof-read

When completing the application, use the features provided and save your application as you go. Once you have drafted your application, ask someone to proof-read (in Word) before submitting.

## Extra writing tips

Good applications are those that use the following to support their project:

* statistics (facts and figures)
* case studies (examples)
* [plain English](https://www.vic.gov.au/writing-plain-english)
* passion, and
* spell-check.

# Check list

Make sure you are ready to build your application by doing the following:

* + - Read and understand Funding Guidelines, Application Form and Assessment Criteria
    - Gather all supporting documents
    - Plan out your application
    - Target your response
    - Use writing tips

# Useful resources

There are many resources to help you build the best application possible. There is also a lot of public information about grant writing and applications. If using resources outside of those provided by Parks Victoria, it is recommended to use Australian sources for greater relevance.

# Legal accountability

Parks Victoria is legally responsible to properly account for public money. This responsibility includes accounting for any funds provided to groups through Parks Victoria, under any funding program. By accepting funds from Parks Victoria, the group also becomes legally accountable to ensure that the public money is properly spent.

# Contact us

If you have any queries, or require more information, please contact Parks Victoria via:email: [VolunteeringFund@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:VolunteeringFund@parks.vic.gov.au) or phone: 1300 375 323