

South Australian Soils Collaboration Centre SA Soils Bursary Program 2026-2027

July 2026

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1. Purpose

The **South Australian Soils Bursary Program** has been established by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) as an initiative of the Soils Collaboration Centre (SCC).

The Program provides financial support for South Australians working with soils to participate in training, development and knowledge sharing activities. Bursary recipients will benefit from opportunities to build their soils knowledge and grow their professional networks, with a long-term goal of strengthening future capacity in soil and land management across South Australia.

The Program supports soil enthusiasts including university students, graduates, early-career participants and primary producers to attend soil-focused events and activities that build:

- knowledge - learning, sharing, application
- capacity - skills, confidence and capabilities
- connection - networks, collaboration.

Soil-focused events and knowledge exchange activities must align with National Soil Strategy¹ objectives that prioritise soil health, empower soil innovation and stewards, and strengthen soil knowledge and capability.

The South Australian Soils Bursary Program is being delivered over three years: 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28. A total of \$15,000 is available for the 2026-27 bursary round. Funding is subject to availability and may be exhausted prior to the final round.

2. Bursary category and amount

Eligible applicants may apply for one of the following bursary categories.

Bursary category	Applicant type	Eligible grant amount
Individual training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University student • Recent graduate • Early career 	Up to \$2,000 (per individual)
Group knowledge exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary producer 	Up to \$5,000 (per group)

The bursary supports the following categories:

- **Individual training** - supports individuals to attend soil-related events such as workshops, training sessions or conferences to build skills, knowledge and connections.

Group knowledge exchange - supports groups of at least three primary producers to undertake site visits or engage with experienced soil managers to explore how soil practices or technologies could be applied on their own properties.

¹ [National Soil Strategy - DAFF](#)

3. Key dates

There will be six application periods in the 2026-2027 financial year, unless available funds are exhausted earlier.

Applications close at 5.00pm (ACST) on the following dates:

- 17 July 2026
- 13 November 2026
- 12 March 2027
- 18 September 2026
- 15 January 2027
- 14 May 2027

Applicants will be notified of the outcome approximately four weeks after the closing date of each period.

Successful applicants will be required to provide a written summary including photographs to PIRSA within four weeks of completing the funded activity or event.

4. Who is eligible

The bursary program is open to South Australians who are developing, pursuing or actively engaged in soil science, soil and land management, agricultural sustainability or related fields.

Applicants must currently reside, work, or study in South Australia, not have applied for the SA Soils Bursary in the preceding financial year and fall within one of the following applicant types, as defined for this bursary:

- **Primary producer** - a person or business that undertakes primary production on land in South Australia, actively manages or works that land, and produces goods for sale or trade as a commercial activity (rather than for personal use or hobby purposes), deriving or intending to derive economic benefit from that production. Primary production does not need to be the applicant’s sole or majority source of income.
- **University Student** - a person currently enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification at a recognised university or tertiary institution, with a strong interest in soils, land management or a related field.
- **Recent Graduate** - a person who has completed a secondary school, vocational (e.g. TAFE), or tertiary qualification within the past three years and has a strong interest in, or is beginning to engage with, soils or land management.
- **Early Career** - a person in the early stages of their working life (generally within the first 10 years), who is actively involved in, or seeking to build skills in, soils, agriculture or land management, regardless of formal education pathway.

Supporting evidence will be required on selection of an applicant type

Eligibility Type	Required Evidence
University student	Certificate of enrolment or school ID
Recent graduate	Graduation certificate or academic transcript
Early-career	Brief employment history from applicant
Primary producer	ABN and farming enterprise details

5. Eligible activities

Soil focused events and knowledge exchange activities must align with the following National Soil Strategy objectives:

- prioritise soil health;
- empower soil innovation and stewards;
- strengthen soil knowledge and capability.

Activities must occur between August 2026 and July 2027 to be eligible for funding. Funding will not be provided for events held before the application is successful and the contract signed.

Due to strong demand for conference and training attendance funding, a cap has been introduced to ensure the bursary is distributed as broadly as possible. Funding for individual training is available up to \$2,000 per applicant with priority given to registration costs. Travel and accommodation costs may be included but must not exceed 30% of the total requested amount. Any costs above this limit must be met by the applicant.

Bursary category	Eligible activities
Individual training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference or workshop registration (may include travel and accommodation to 30% of total requested amount) • Field days, demonstrations or site visits with a clear soil or land management focus <p>Online courses, webinars or virtual workshops with a soil focus</p>
<p>Group knowledge exchange</p> <p>Primary producers: minimum of three required to make up the group</p>	<p>Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group-based learning activities involving three or more participants, focused on soils or land management • Coordinated on-farm or site-based learning activities that enable discussion and comparison of practices • Facilitated group sessions to explore soil management approaches, challenges or opportunities • Structured peer learning or discussion groups focused on improving soil outcomes • Visits to sites or regions to observe and discuss soil management in different contexts • Activities that support shared learning and inform decision-making at the paddock or enterprise scale • Reasonable costs associated with coordinating and hosting group activities, including facilitation or host costs where appropriate • Catering directly associated with group learning activities <p>Activities should involve active participation, discussion and shared learning, rather than passive attendance.</p>

6. Ineligible activities

Funding cannot be used for:

- activities not directly related to soil or land management.
- purchase of alcohol, including during meals or as part of host gifts.
- personal travel or expenses not directly linked to the funded activity.
- business development, marketing or commercial sales trips.
- unplanned or additional expenses incurred before, during or after the funded event or activity.
- expenses without adequate documentation (e.g. invoices and evidence of payment).
- events occurring outside of the eligible activity period or prior to a successful application for bursary funding.

7. How to apply

Applicants must complete all sections of the application form, available for download at:

<https://pir.sa.gov.au/regions-and-support/apply-for-funding>

The following criteria need to be addressed.

1. Event relevance

- Describe the event or activity, its soil related focus and the target audience.
- Explain how it aligns with the National Soils Strategy objectives.

2. Knowledge and capacity building

- Describe how this activity or event will build your knowledge and capacity (skills, confidence, capability) in soil and land management, and how it aligns with your goals or interests
- Describe how you plan to use or apply what you will learn from your soil related event or activity.

3. Connections

- Describe how you will share what you learn with others and how you will build connections and networks.

4. Financial information

- Provide a detailed breakdown of expected costs (e.g. event registration, travel, accommodation).
- Where workshop or speaker fees exceed the bursary limit, applicants must identify how the remaining costs will be funded.

Application closing dates are listed in Section 3 – Key dates.

Completed applications should be submitted to pirsa.grantsenquiries@sa.gov.au.

8. Bursary administration and payment process

Preliminary review

Applications will be assessed after each closing period, in the order they are received until available funds are exhausted.

Once submitted, each application will undergo a preliminary evaluation to confirm eligibility, ensure all criteria are addressed, and determine its readiness for review by the assessment panel. Applications that meet all requirements will be deemed complete and progress to panel assessment. Incomplete applications will not enter the assessment queue until all required information is provided.

Assessment panel

Eligible applications that pass the preliminary review will be assessed by a panel comprising representatives and stakeholders from the South Australian Soils Collaboration Centre.

Applications will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria with consideration given to:

- how well the application aligns with the objectives of the National Soil Strategy
- the relevance and quality of the proposed event or activity
- expected benefits to the applicant, including knowledge and capacity building
- potential for application of learning, knowledge sharing and broader impact.

Consideration will also be given to geographic distribution, timing of events, and the anticipated benefits in terms of knowledge gained, application, and sharing of outcomes. Value for money will be assessed, including the proportion of funding allocated to registration or participation costs relative to travel.

The assessment panel may approve funding up to the requested amount or a lesser amount based on its assessment. The panel will provide recommendations from the round and the Minister (or delegate) for Primary Industries and Regional Development will make the final decision on approval of all applications.

Assessors will aim to notify applicants of the outcome approximately four weeks after the relevant closing period. Relevant bursary paperwork will be sent to successful applicants.

Contracting

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development to receive the bursary.

Successful applicants will be expected to meet all terms and conditions of the agreement, including reporting requirements and must comply with Australian and State legislation, regulations and codes in delivery of the program.

PIRSA reserves the right to request further information from you to assist with the assessment of your application or to verify any information provided in your application.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- provide quotes or invoices to substantiate requested funding;
- manage all travel arrangements, insurance (if required), event registrations and be responsible for all out-of-pocket expenses above the bursary amount;
- provide a headshot and short bio and consent to their use on the website and in program-related communications, including media releases;
- acknowledge the contribution of Government of South Australia and the Australian Government in any social media posts or media arising from the bursary.

Funding will be paid to the successful applicant upon execution of the grant agreement.

Applicants must notify PIRSA if the event is cancelled, postponed, changed, or if costs are reduced. Unspent or ineligible funds may be required to be repaid.

Within one month of completing the funded activity, successful applicants must provide:

- evidence of payment for approved expenditure, such as:
 - bank statement including account details showing payment of invoices;
 - paid invoice or supplier statement showing zero balance;
 - bank lodgement receipt including payee account name and account number, invoice number of supplier, amount and date.
- signed acquittal form.
- a short post-event summary including key learnings and practical outcomes from attending the event, and photographs of yourself in attendance, to be used by PIRSA in program-related communications.

9. Contact

For enquiries about the South Australian Soils Bursary Program contact:

Dr Amanda Schapel - Program Manager, Soils Collaboration Centre

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Email: pirsa.sasoilnetwork@sa.gov.au

To find out more about the South Australian Soils Collaboration Centre: <http://pir.sa.gov.au/scc>