

ONLY CATCHING WATER WEEDS?

The illegal sale of *Salvinia* spp. and Water Hyacinth can clog waterways and rivers, impact on our love for the great outdoors - and kills fish.



Supporting Better Communities



PROHIBITED WEED CASE STUDY

Situation

In late 2021, Crime Stoppers South Australia partnered with Green Adelaide and PIRSA to develop and deliver a campaign to raise awareness about the illegal trade of Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and *Salvinia* (*Salvinia* spp). Both prohibited weed varieties are commonly used as ornamental plants for garden ponds, but choke wetlands and waterways, kill native wildlife and reduce opportunities for boating, fishing and swimming. Almost every infestation in southern Australia has resulted from deliberate planting or disposal of unwanted plants readily sourced from the aquatic trade.

Objectives

The two primary objectives for this campaign were to:

- Engage the South Australian community to educate on the environmental harm caused by Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and *Salvinia* (*Salvinia* spp) when released into waterways and highlight that it is illegal to trade either of these plant varieties.
- Encourage people with information about the illicit trade and sale of these two weed varieties to share what they know with Crime Stoppers, without needing to say who they are or get involved – with details provided to PIRSA for follow up investigation as required.

Elements

- The suite of materials – made possible through a joint funding arrangement between Crime Stoppers SA and Green Adelaide – included a poster which was disseminated throughout relevant PIRSA and Green Adelaide locations, garden centres and other public locations.
- Digital assets were developed for use across multiple social media platforms by all campaign partners and media.
- A mix of organic and paid advertising expanded community reach and engagement.
- A media release was developed and an exclusive interview opportunity offered to The Advertiser before wider distribution to other South Australia media outlets.

Online Reporting

- A dedicated reporting portal was deployed on the homepage of the Crime Stoppers SA website. A distinctive click-through panel on the home page to a dedicated campaign page provided significant prominence throughout the initiative.
- When an online report was submitted, a notification was sent to the campaign manager as a prompt to login and retrieve the details from WordPress, with encrypted fields activated to mitigate privacy risks.
- Crime Stoppers SA demonstrated its ability to adapt its processes and systems to meet the reporting requirements, while still maintaining the important value proposition for people to remain anonymous.

Results

- Strong engagement with the South Australian community, with campaign content shared through traditional and online platforms.
- Good media interest across radio, print, and online.
- Social media promotion achieved an estimated reach of more than **144,579** people, **2,337** reactions, comments or shares and **12,274** clicks to the Crime Stoppers SA website for more information.
- Prominent (and ongoing) online presence through Crime Stoppers SA website.
- Distribution of campaign poster asset to garden centres and other locations.
- Support (particularly social media content sharing) from campaign partners, Green Adelaide and PIRSA.
- The prohibited weeds campaign page earned a position in the **top 10 pages visited** for the total website, with 1,022 pageviews.
- A total of **34,959** visitors to the website, **41,099** sessions and **94,329** pageviews were logged during the campaign period.
- A number of anonymous reports were received for follow-up investigation.

Media coverage and community engagement throughout the campaign was high and is regarded as a very positive outcome.