



WILSON

Groups hail funding to fight river weed

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WITH hydrocotyle continuing to threaten the health of the Canning River, several environmental groups have welcomed Federal funding to help eradicate the aquatic weed.

As part of the funding, \$1 million will be put towards the Swan-Canning River Recovery Program, to be delivered over two years.

Federal Member for Swan Steve Irons said about half of this would be dedicated to weed eradication.

The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) had directed \$77,135 to tackling hydrocotyle over the past decade, while the Two Rivers Catchment Group had directed \$27,770 over the same time.

Despite this, Mr Irons said the problem kept surfacing.

"This \$500,000 is therefore an unprecedented injection of Federal funds to deal with this issue," he said.

Hydrocotyle has been a major issue for the Canning River for the past three decades, having first appeared in the river in the 1980s.

Mr Irons said the weed eradication program would likely be developed under the guidance of SERCUL, Wilson Wetlands Action Group (WWAG) and Canning River Regional Park Volunteers.



Wilson Wetlands Action Group chairman Russell Gorton and Federal Member for Swan Steve Irons helping to clear the river of hydrocotyle. Picture: Martin Kennealey

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WWAG chairman Russell Gorton said while funding was welcomed, environmental funding from both State and Federal governments was thin at best. "Both levels of government need to understand that community volunteers need sound and regular funding to support them in their endeavours," he said.

SERCUL chief executive Julie Robert said if funding was used correctly, it could make a dent in the management of remaining hydrocotyle sites and move the species from control to "eradicable".

"The funds will also help restore major sites along the Canning River foreshore that desperately need weed removal and revegetation with local species," she said.

"Much restoration has been occurring, but there are now sites that if restored would bridge the gaps between other projects and make the maintenance of the foreshore much more manageable."

The Wilson Lagoon had the highest levels of hydrocotyle, and continued financial support was needed to ensure their progress did not go backwards.

Swan River Trust River acting river park manager Stephen King said the aquatic weed could severely affect the recreational and environmental values of the Canning River if it was not controlled.

Of the remaining \$1m of federal funding, \$400,000 is intended to go towards community action and \$100,000 towards river awareness through local education.