



MEDIA RELEASE

2 October 2019

Running run-off out of town: one-day blitz on building site waterway controls

Hundreds of building sites across Sydney and the Central Coast will be inspected on 15 October as part of a blitz to protect local waterways from run-off.

The campaign targets erosion and sediment control on building and construction sites and highlights the impact of sediment laden run-off on our waterways.

The blitz aims to build on the improvements achieved in the month-long campaign held in May when more than 1,110 building sites were inspected by 19 councils, NSW Environment Protection Authority and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment officers.

In May, 63 per cent were compliant with the sediment requirements, a 13 per cent improvement on the 2018 campaign. A total of \$290,700 in fines was issued for sites that failed to follow the rules.

Get the Site Right is a joint program between the Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges River Combined Councils Committee, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, Lake Macquarie Council, NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and local councils.

EPA Regional Director Metropolitan Giselle Howard said construction sites were getting the message about sediment control.

“Results from the May campaign showed that there was an 86 per cent improvement in compliance rates on sites that were non-compliant on first visit and then had a repeat visit,” Ms Howard said.

“Get the Site Right isn’t just about fines. While we won’t hesitate to issue them for a breach the real aim is to stop run-off, and that means educating developers and builders about the role they can play to improve the health of our waterways by managing and preventing sediment laden run-off.”

“Many tradies and construction workers also like to fish in their time off, or to picnic with their families around our city’s iconic waterways, so at work it is possible for them to make the connection to help keep our environment clean and healthy. “

Parramatta River Catchment Group Chair Councillor Mark Drury said while it was pleasing to see an improvement in compliance rates, there was still more work to do to deliver a clean and safe river for the community to enjoy.

“Step 5 of our 10-step Masterplan is to reduce stormwater run-off. Stormwater is the greatest contemporary source of contaminants in the Parramatta River and sediment laden run-off is a significant contributor,” Clr Drury said.



“Get the Site Right is an important part of our ongoing strategy to manage the environmental impacts of construction to help achieve our mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025.”

Sediment spills affect our environment and waterways by:

- Destroying aquatic habitats and smothering native plants and animals that live in our waterways.
- Directly polluting creeks, rivers and harbours by filling them with dirt, soil, sand and mud. This leads to poorer water quality, affecting swimming or leisure activities in and around our waterways.
- Blocking stormwater drains leading to flooding and overflows.
- Eroding creek and riverbanks.

Members of the public can report pollution incidents, including poor sediment control, to the EPA’s 24/7 Environment Line on 131 555.

More information about the campaign and the importance of erosion and sediment control is available at: www.ourlivingriver.com.au/getthesiteright

Note to Editors

- Images available on request
- On Tuesday 15 October, participating councils, NSW EPA and Department of Planning Industry & Environment will be patrolling building sites across Sydney and the Central Coast as part of a one-day inspection blitz. Interviews, photos and other media opportunities can be arranged upon request.

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