



MEDIA RELEASE

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Good news for local waterways as builders and renovators Get the Site Right

Builders, developers and home renovators are more successfully implementing erosion and sediment controls on building sites to protect our local waterways, according to results from the recent *Get the Site Right* education and compliance campaign.

In June 2020, the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and 14 local councils inspected more than 600 sites across Sydney and the Central Coast. Almost three quarters (73%) of the sites inspected were compliant. This is compared to the May 2019 campaign where only 63% of sites inspected were managing their sites adequately.

A total of \$189,484 in fines was issued to non-compliant sites. Offences ranged from no controls in place at all and unprotected soil stockpiles in locations where they could be washed away, to minor offences such as ruptured sediment bags and inadequate sweeping of roads and driveways.

Sediment runoff fills our creeks, rivers and harbours with dirt, soil, sand and mud. This leads to poorer water quality, affecting swimming and leisure activities in and around waterways. It also degrades aquatic habitats by smothering marine plants and animals. Sediment runoff can also block stormwater drains leading to flooding and overflows and erosion of creeks and riverbanks.

The improvement in compliance rates is encouraging in light of the increase in home renovation and DIY projects stemming from COVID-19 restrictions and introduction of government stimulus packages for builders and renovators.

PRCG Chair, Cr Mark Drury, said that he was pleased by the growing number of builders and developers who were contributing to improving waterway health by preventing sediment runoff from leaving their sites and being washed into stormwater drains and out to our creeks and rivers.

“Reducing sediment and stormwater runoff is a key factor in achieving our mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again,” Cr Drury said.

“We’re creating a world-class river for Sydney with clean and safe water that supports places for fun and recreation, thriving ecosystems for plants and animals, tourism and business opportunities, and a more liveable city in these times of changing climate and urban heat.”

Now in its fifth year, the Get the Site Right campaign is a joint program between the Cooks River Alliance, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Georges Riverkeeper, Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG), Sydney Coastal Councils Group, local Sydney councils and Lake Macquarie Council.



Councils that participated in the June 2020 campaign include: Bayside City Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canterbury Bankstown, Georges River Council, Hunters Hill Council, Lake Macquarie Council, Liverpool City Council, Northern Beaches Council, City of Parramatta Council, Strathfield Council, Sutherland Shire Council, Waverley Council, Randwick City Council and Willoughby City Council.

Members of the public who may be out exercising near our waterways during these times, are encouraged to report pollution incidents, including poor sediment control, to their local council or 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

Parramatta River Catchment Group media enquiries

Nadia Young

PRCG Communications Officer

Email: nadia.young@ourlivingriver.com.au

Phone: (02) 9911 6202 / 0415 231 339

EPA media enquiries

Lisa Power

Senior Public Affairs Officer, Public Affairs and Communications

Email: Lisa.Power@epa.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 8275 1567 / 0408 028 756

24-hour Media Line: 9995 6415