



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Expanded building site inspection blitz across NSW timely with forecast of more wet weather**

Erosion and sediment controls at building and construction sites across NSW will be put under a compliance microscope this May as the *Get the Site Right* education and compliance campaign expands into six new council areas.

Blue Mountains, Fairfield, Goulburn, Lithgow, Shellharbour and Wollongong Councils, and WaterNSW will join an existing *Get the Site Right* taskforce that includes the Cooks River Alliance, Department of Planning and Environment, Georges Riverkeeper, NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Parramatta River Catchment Group, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, and more than 20 Sydney councils.

The campaign launched by Parramatta River Catchment Group in 2016 aims to educate builders and developers on best practice erosion and sediment controls and highlight the impact of sediment laden runoff on our waterways and wildlife.

The growth of the campaign is timely in the wake of the recent significant rainfall and flooding experienced across parts of NSW, with more wet weather forecast in the coming months.

Already, an unprecedented amount of stormwater runoff including sediment from building sites has flowed into the state's rivers, harbours and beaches.

The sediment laden runoff from building sites often contains common building materials such as cement, sand and soil. In large amounts, these materials can contaminate water and cause algal blooms that harm marine plants and animals. They can also build up in marine species and have a dangerous impact on the food chain.

The May campaign focuses on encouraging builders and developers to improve erosion and sediment controls on their sites to prevent further runoff from impacting our currently stressed waterways.

Examples of ways builders can manage sediment runoff include, establishing a single, stabilised entry and exit point to prevent tracking sediment off the site, installing sediment fencing correctly, diverting clean stormwater around the work site, and connecting downpipes from guttering to stormwater drains as soon as the roof is installed.

Leaving as much vegetation on the site and street verge as possible during construction, covering stockpiles from rain and wind, and sweeping the footpath and road every day and not hosing sediment into stormwater drains can also have a positive impact with little cost or time commitment.



NSW EPA Director Operations James Goodwin said the discoloration and pollution of many of the state's waterways following heavy rains this year highlights what can happen when significant amounts of soil, litter, and other waste enters our waterways.

"Studies by the EPA show a large building site can lose up to four truckloads of soil in a single storm," Mr Goodwin said.

"By ensuring proper controls are in place on their sites, builders and developers play an important role in protecting our waterways and marine life from the harmful effects of sediment runoff. They can also avoid costly building materials being washed away."

Parramatta River Catchment Group Coordinator, Nell Graham, said it was pleasing to see the campaign expand to other NSW council areas.

"We launched the campaign in 2016 with just nine councils and now more than 20 councils regularly take part in the month-long campaign in May and the follow-up Blitz Week in October," Ms Graham said.

"Stormwater runoff is the biggest source of pollution in our waterways and sediment runoff from building and construction sites is a major contributor. Campaigns such as *Get the Site Right* raise awareness about the different ways the building industry and community can help care for our local waterways.

The *Get the Site Right* campaign will run throughout May with a one-day inspection blitz on Thursday, 19 May. A follow-up inspection blitz week will be held in October.

Members of the public 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.

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**Note to Editors:**

Images available on request.

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