

MEDIA RELEASE

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Campaign to stop sediment runoff as building and home renovations increase

The *Get the Site Right* campaign in June will increase awareness of the dangers of runoff from building sites impacting the environment and encourage developers, builders and home renovators to implement appropriate erosion and sediment controls.

The campaign is kicking off in response to an increase in home renovation and DIY projects during the COVID-19 isolation period as well as several large construction projects that are expected to commence in coming months.

Developments of all sizes will be monitored by councils and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as part of the month-long campaign.

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

Environment Minister Matt Kean said that regardless of the project size, implementing proper erosion and sediment controls is key to protecting our waterways.

“Whether you’re a home renovator who’s laying new paving or a developer building a 20-storey apartment block, it’s important that you prevent runoff from leaving your site,” Mr Kean said.

“When sediments such as sand or soil and other building materials are washed down stormwater drains and into our waterways, it not only degrades water quality it can destroy aquatic habitats by smothering native plants and animals that live there.

“It also can block stormwater drains leading to flooding and overflows.”

PRCG Chair Cr Mark Drury said that builders and home renovators can’t afford to be complacent about the impacts of site runoff.

“Builders and renovators need to be aware that their actions can have a significant impact on the health of our local rivers and creeks. *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,” Cr Drury said.

“Every building site, regardless of size, must ensure they have controls in place to help improve river health for the entire community and the benefit of the environment.”

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 or to their local council.

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

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