



MEDIA RELEASE

18 August 2023

Compliant building sites good news for NSW waterways

NSW builders are 'getting the site right' with more than half successfully implementing erosion and sediment controls to protect local environments, but councils and regulators still had to hand out \$376,789 in fines in May.

Twenty-two councils across Greater Sydney and regional NSW joined forces for the latest campaign with support from NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Department of Planning and Environment (DPE).

NSW EPA A/Executive Director, Operations Steve Orr said this year's campaign aimed to encourage builders to manage their litter and waste as well as maintaining proper sediment and erosion controls.

"We've seen some great improvements this year, but we know builders and site managers can still do better," Mr Orr said.

"Our officers observed poorly maintained stockpiles, trip hazards on footpaths and concrete slurry runoff at some sites, which poses a threat to workers and the environment.

"We're also looking at whether construction sites are correctly containing loose litter and other waste which could blow or wash off site, impacting local waterways.

"NSW has a lot of construction projects in the pipeline, so we don't want to see overflowing bins, poorly contained waste or sediment run-off as we build."

Regulatory staff conducted 1,177 inspections of 825 building and construction sites, with around 30 per cent of inspections conducted on 18 May 'blitz day'.

Of all the sites inspected, 61 per cent were found to be compliant, up six per cent from inspections in October 2022. For sites inspected more than once, 75 per cent were found to be compliant on the second visit, highlighting the importance of repeat inspections and ongoing education.

EPA officers attended 168 site inspections, supporting council staff to ensure builders had appropriate erosion and sediment controls and litter prevention strategies in place. EPA and DPE officers also jointly inspected several large infrastructure projects, including six schools and one hospital under construction.

Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) Executive Officer, Ms Sarah Joyce commended the work of builders, developers, and council officers in supporting ongoing efforts by the NSW EPA, SCCG and other catchment groups to reduce the impact of stormwater pollution on waterway health.



“This year’s successful Get the Site Right campaign is part of a number of SCCG-led projects like the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program, Greater Sydney Harbour Litter Prevention Project and the Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour that, with financial support from the NSW Government, aim to improve the health of Sydney’s most iconic waterways.”

Get the Site Right is a joint taskforce between the Cooks River Alliance, Georges Riverkeeper, DPE, EPA, Parramatta River Catchment Group, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, WaterNSW, and local councils.

Members of the public are encouraged to report pollution incidents, including poor sediment control, to their local council or via the NSW EPA’s 24-hour Environment Line on 131 555. A follow-up inspection blitz week will be held in October.

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Note to Editors:

- Participating councils in the May 2023 campaign include:
 - Bayside Council, Blacktown City Council, Burwood Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canada Bay, City of Canterbury Bankstown, City of Parramatta, City of Ryde, Fairfield City Council, Georges River Council, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Inner West Council, Lane Cove Council, Lithgow City Council, North Sydney Council, Northern Beaches Council, Randwick City Council, Sutherland Shire Council, Waverley Council, Willoughby City Council, Woollahra Municipal Council, and Wollondilly Shire Council.
- Images are available on request.