



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Education and enforcement key to improved compliance on NSW building sites**

NSW builders are increasingly showing they can 'get the site right', as revealed by the May 2024 inspection blitz with 26 councils participating in more than 1,200 inspections across 965 building sites in Sydney and regional NSW.

Compliance rates rose by 5 per cent since the last campaign in October 2023, with nearly 72 per cent of sites meeting standards after a second inspection. Council officers also saw a 46 per cent increase in compliance between the first and second inspections – 28 per cent more than the previous campaign – underscoring the value of ongoing monitoring and education.

For non-compliant sites, participating councils issued more than 100 penalty notices totalling \$314,824 – almost \$90,000 more than in October due to recently strengthened penalty notice fines under the Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act. Offences included poorly installed sediment fences, unprotected stockpiles, and cement slurry escaping from the site.

NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Executive Director Operations, Jason Gordon said EPA regulatory officers accompanied councils on a number of inspections and emphasised the importance of minimising environmental impacts from building sites.

“A single storm can wash away up to four truckloads of soil from a building site, which can severely damage aquatic ecosystems. It’s crucial for builders to implement proper systems to protect local waterways,” Mr Gordon said.

“Developers and builders need to be proactive and preventing sediment from leaving their sites by using effective erosion and sediment controls.”

Parramatta River Catchment Group Coordinator, Alexi Gilchrist attributed the improved compliance rate to the ongoing support for Get the Site Right.

“The success of Get the Site Right is due to the sustained collaboration between local councils, catchment groups, and the NSW EPA to address the issue of sediment runoff,” Mr Gilchrist said.

“As we continue to increase access to new swim sites in the Parramatta River, it remains crucial that we continue to educate builders and developers on how to protect our waterways through the Get the Site Right program.”

Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) Executive Director, Sarah Joyce commented on the campaign’s success and emphasised the critical role of council support in maintaining waterway health through sustainable construction practices.

“We’re proud of the campaign’s ongoing success, with rising compliance rates reflecting our shared commitment to safeguarding Sydney waterways and surrounding environments.”

“The active involvement and support from participating councils is crucial in preventing sediment pollution and ensuring the long-term health of our coastal and urban ecosystems,” Ms Joyce said.

Get the Site Right is a joint taskforce between the Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges Riverkeeper, NSW Environment Protection Authority, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, WaterNSW, and councils across NSW.

A second inspection 'Blitz Week' will be held from 14-18 October 2024 when councils will be out in force and taking regulatory action as required.

This year's inspection blitz will follow the recent increase in penalty notice fines under the POEO Act by the EPA. Many common offences, such as committing water pollution or non-compliance with a clean-up notice now have increased fines including:

- \$15,000 for a first offence and \$22,500 for a second offence for individuals
- \$30,000 for a first offence and \$45,000 for a second offence for corporations.

For more information, visit: Environment Protection Legislation Amendment (Stronger Regulation and Penalties) Act 2024 ([nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au)).

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.

– ENDS –

Participating councils in the May 2024 campaign: Bayside Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Burwood Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canada Bay, City of Canterbury Bankstown, City of Parramatta, City of Ryde, Georges River Council, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Hunter's Hill Council, Inner West Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Lane Cove Municipal Council, Liverpool City Council, Northern Beaches Council, North Sydney Council, Randwick City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Shoalhaven City Council, Strathfield Council, Sutherland Shire Council, Waverley Council, Willoughby City Council, Wollondilly Shire Council, and Woollahra Municipal Council.

#### **Note to Editors:**

Images available on request.

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