



MEDIA STATEMENT

THE HON VERITY FIRTH MP

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister for Women / Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)

13 August 2008

Community input sought on reducing construction noise

NSW communities are being asked to comment from today on new guidelines designed to help lessen the impact of noisy building sites on neighbours.

Minister for Climate Change and Environment, Verity Firth said it was the first overhaul of rules surrounding noise from construction sites since 1985.

“Construction noise accounts for almost six per cent of noise complaints to the Environment Line and 10 per cent of calls to local councils,” Ms Firth said.

“Noise from building sites can quickly shatter the peace of our neighbourhoods.

“You can’t build without a certain amount of noise, but you can build in a way that minimises the impact of noise on the people around you.

“The building industry and local councils have asked for clearer and more detailed advice on how to deal with noise complaints and how to work in a way that avoids them in the first place.

“These proposed guidelines spell out clear and practical advice to balance the needs of site managers with those of neighbours.”

The Guidelines cover matters including:

- ◇ community notification,
- ◇ assessing noise levels,
- ◇ operating plant quietly and efficiently, and
- ◇ handling complaints.

“The solutions can often be as simple as installing a noise wall, avoiding dropping materials from a height, or avoiding reverse alarms by organising the site so delivering trucks only drive forward.

“For large scale construction managers, there’s guidance on how consents and licences operate and how noise should be measured.”

Ms Firth said the draft guidelines had been developed after consultation with building industry groups, infrastructure providers and councils.

They also draw on approaches successfully applied on major construction projects regulated by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) such as the Lane Cove Tunnel and Epping to Chatswood to Rail Line.

The NSW Government has the largest infrastructure construction program in the State, with a record \$13.9 billion spend on capital works this financial year – up 11% – and \$57.6 billion over the next four years.

Ms Firth said while the guidelines were voluntary and there to help industry be better neighbours, they could also be enforced by DECC as licence conditions for major infrastructure projects, or by councils when setting development conditions for local building work.

The draft Construction Noise Guideline can be found on the DECC website at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/noise/constructnoise.htm> or by calling 131 555. Submissions can be made until Friday 19 September 2008.

“We are encouraging comment from industry, environmental and community groups as well as from local councils to make sure the final guidelines work for everyone,” Ms Firth said.

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