

Auckland Council's 'Close the Gap' Initiative

IECA (Australasia) Environmental Excellence Awards 2020



'Close the Gap' (the GAP project) is an Auckland Council initiative that aims to reduce contaminants running into streams by proactively targeting erosion and sediment controls on small building sites that would not otherwise be captured as part of the resource consent regulatory compliance regime.

Designed to dovetail into monitoring by building inspectors, it manages the significant risk period of land disturbance activity at the start of every small site building project up until the first site inspection. As the title of the project suggests it aims to close the 'gap' between bulk earthworks sign-off and the first small site inspection, creating an end-to-end monitoring regime.

Initiated in May 2019, the GAP project has seen more than 5,500 residential build sites visited by two full-time Regulatory Compliance officers dedicated to ensuring adequate controls are in place. Recent figures show progressive improvement with 51 per cent of sites lacking appropriate control compared with 90 per cent prior to project commencement.

After targeting key hotspots, this initiative is now being adopted widely throughout the region. A central aim of the next phase is to embed this approach as 'business as usual' and secure a long-term change in construction industry behaviour.