

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

Tuesday 9 September, 2008

INDEPENDENT AUDITING OF DREDGING BEGINS

Independent auditing of Port Phillip Bay dredging has begun, Environmental Monitor, Mick Bourke announced today.

Mr Bourke said the Office had recently appointed Dr Peter Nadebaum of GHD, a professional with extensive experience in environmental auditing, to run a total of 11 independent environmental audits on dredging activities.

“The Office is pleased to have Dr Nadebaum on board to help us ensure the Project isn’t cutting any corners,” Mr Bourke said.

“Dr Nadebaum has a lot of experience conducting environmental audits and has managed a long list of significant auditing projects including environmental audits of major Victorian and interstate organisations and operations.

“I am confident Dr Nadebaum and his team will closely examine the Project’s environmental performance to determine whether or not the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) and its Project have followed the Environmental Management Plan’s rules that are in place to protect the long-term health of the Bay,” Mr Bourke said.

Auditing of the Project began this week and will involve four audits to assess PoMC’s implementation of the rulebook and seven audits to examine the environmental compliance of key parts of the Project, including ensuring that no over-dredging has happened in the Entrance and that the bund has been built exactly as was planned.

The GHD team will use a rigorous, systematic process to check that all requirements have been met, and that there is evidence to back this up.

Dr Nadebaum said the methods that the audit team are using to audit the Project follow methods that are adopted internationally for such work.

“Australia has been at the forefront of using audits to provide assurance that regulatory compliance is achieved,” Dr Nadebaum said.

“We have been applying these methods in diverse areas such as the auditing of drinking water systems to ensure that they are safe, in the auditing of contaminated land, groundwater and sediments to ensure that they will not affect human health and the environment, and in the auditing of the environmental management systems of major organisations to ensure that the environment will be protected,” he said.

Mr Bourke said the Office expected to have the first independent audit report available to the community by the end of November 2008.

“Should the audits find anything unusual; the Office will consider the audit findings and determine the need, scope and means by which an investigation should be conducted,” he said.

“The Office will immediately inform PoMC and the Project’s regulators of any non-conformances identified by the independent auditor. The Office will also promptly inform the community.”