

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

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CONTAMINATED SILTS DREDGED BY THE BOOK

An independent audit on the management of contaminated silts for the Channel Deepening Project found the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) complied with the rule book.

Releasing the *Management of Contaminated Sediment Audit* report today, Office of the Environmental Monitor Director Don Hough said the audit examined the removal, management and placement of contaminated soft silts by the dredge vessels.

“PoMC finished dredging contaminated silts on 5 October 2008,” Mr Hough said.

“The Environmental Management Plan (EMP) includes 11 specific rules that PoMC must follow when dredging contaminated silt. They relate to how the silt must be dredged, transported and placed and they exist to ensure the health of the community and environment is not impacted.

“The targeted independent audit commissioned by the Office concluded that PoMC followed the rules to the letter.

“The Office acknowledges the high-level of compliance PoMC has achieved for the project so far, and we are particularly satisfied that no rules were broken during the dredging of contaminated silt.

“Specific rules also exist for the removal, management and placement of contaminated clay by the grab dredges,” Mr Hough said.

He said the Victorian community would be interested in the audit’s findings.

“The community, particularly bayside residents have shown a lot of interest in the process surrounding the dredging of contaminated silt from the Yarra River and north of Port Phillip Bay,” Mr Hough said.

“A small amount of contaminated clay remains to be dredged by the grab dredges and the Office will continue to keep a close eye on PoMC to make sure this material is managed correctly.”

Mr Hough said ongoing Bay and beach water quality monitoring had not revealed any abnormal water quality results from dredging.

“Weekly testing of beach water and monthly testing of the Bay’s water has shown the levels for metals and organic chemicals are consistent with historic levels for the Bay and are not elevated,” he said.

The *Management of Contaminated Sediment Audit* is one of 11 audits of the implementation of the EMP for the Channel Deepening Project. Dr Peter Nadebaum of GHD conducted the audit.

Mr Hough said that dredging and management of contaminated sediment was the focus of three independent audits.

“Two more targeted audits scheduled to begin by the middle of the year will double-check that the bund has been built correctly and that the sand capping layer used to cover contaminated material in the bund has been applied correctly,” Mr Hough said.

All audit reports are available at www.oem.vic.gov.au/Independentaudits.

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