

Office of the Environmental Monitor

Fact Sheet: Role of the Office

Background

In December 2007, following a detailed assessment, involving public input, the Victorian Government approved the Channel Deepening Project (the Project) proposed by the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC).

The approval of the Project was subject to conditions, including that PoMC must comply with a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (EMP) or rule book. Approved by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments, the EMP is a 127 page document that sets out the environmental safeguards required to avoid, minimise and control environmental effects to Port Phillip Bay from dredging.

The Victorian Government established the Office of the Environmental Monitor (the Office) in December 2007 as a requirement for the Project. The Office is led by Mick Bourke, the Environmental Monitor, and is supported by a team of five people.

Who is the Environmental Monitor?

Mick Bourke, Chairman of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria, was appointed the Environmental Monitor in December 2007.

While holding the role of the Environmental Monitor, Mr Bourke has delegated his powers and responsibilities under the Environment Protection Act to senior executives at EPA Victoria and to the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), when dealing with Channel Deepening Project, PoMC or Port Phillip Bay matters.

PoMC is obliged to assist the Environmental Monitor. Expert advice from the Independent Expert Group and administrative support from DSE will also be available upon request by the Office. The Office is also able to commission audits and investigations as required.

What is the role of the Office?

The Office of the Environmental Monitor provides an around-the-clock independent and transparent view on the environmental performance of the Channel Deepening Project.

Its objectives are to:

- Be accessible to all stakeholders and the community;
- Scrutinise, report and advise on the Project's environmental performance in an independent and transparent way; and
- Communicate all available information on the Project's environmental performance in a timely manner to stakeholders and the community.

The Office will:

- **Scrutinise** results from Baywide Monitoring Programs, other environmental monitoring programs, and PoMC's conformance against the regulatory and environmental controls set out in the EMP;
- **Report** quarterly, annually and at other critical points on the Project's environmental performance;
- **Advise** Government, PoMC and the community on the findings arising from the Office's reports on the Project's environmental performance; and
- **Consult** stakeholders and the community to remain informed on their issues and concerns.

Reporting by the Office

All advice and reports produced by the Office will be publicly available at www.oem.vic.gov.au.