

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

Wednesday, 10 June, 2009

BACKGROUND BAY TURBIDITY

Turbidity levels across Port Phillip Bay remained below the Channel Deepening Project's environmental limits last week Environmental Monitor, Mick Bourke said today.

"The latest results from the monitoring program show turbidity was low across all monitoring sites and remained below all the Channel Deepening Project's Response Levels and environmental limits," Mr Bourke said.

"The latest results cover the period from 1 to 7 June, 2009 and show that the environmental limits set to protect Port Phillip Bay's sensitive plants and animals from the effects of increased turbidity were not exceeded."

Mr Bourke said the recent rain could cause turbidity in Port Phillip Bay and the Yarra River to increase.

"Past monitoring data has shown turbidity levels can be affected by the weather, particularly wind and rain. With this in mind, the Office of the Environmental Monitor expects to see elevated turbidity levels at some bay monitoring sites over the coming days."

Mr Bourke said results from EPA Victoria's Beach Monitoring Program also returned good results.

"Around the Bay 36 beaches were tested for bacteria, heavy metals, organic chemicals and algae last week," Mr Bourke said.

The latest available results indicate that the majority of beaches were within the guideline levels for all parameters, except for bacterial levels at Rosebud, Dromana and Safety Beach. The elevated enterococci result at Rosebud, Dromana and Safety Beach was likely to be linked with recent rain.

"As a general precaution, EPA Victoria advises people not to swim near stormwater drains, rivers, streams and other outlets into the Bay during and for at least 24 hours after rainfall."

Weekly results on beach water quality are available from (www.oem.vic.gov.au and www.epa.vic.gov.au/water/beach_monitoring).

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