

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

Wednesday, 17 June, 2009

WEATHER AFFECTS TURBIDITY IN HOBSONS BAY

Port Phillip Bay recorded low turbidity across most dredging monitoring sites last week, except for one site in the north of the Bay, Environmental Monitor, Mick Bourke said.

“On 10 June, 2009 at around 6.00 am turbidity levels at a monitoring buoy in Hobsons Bay exceeded the Channel Deepening Project’s Response Level 1,” Mr Bourke said.

“The elevated turbidity reading was caused by weather conditions including strong winds and rain across Melbourne’s catchment.

“The dredge vessels were not operating in Hobsons Bay at the time, and the Office noted that turbidity returned to background levels at this site, once the weather conditions eased.”

Mr Bourke said increased turbidity readings at the Hobsons Bay Mud site had been recorded previously.

“Past monitoring data shows Bay turbidity levels can be affected by the weather, particularly the combination of rain and strong winds. These conditions have previously caused similar high turbidity levels within Hobsons Bay, and this is not unusual.”

Mr Bourke also said results from EPA Victoria’s Beach Monitoring Program showed good water quality at Bay beaches.

“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 all beaches were within guideline levels for all parameters.

“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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