

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

Wednesday 5 August, 2009

BAY TURBIDITY AFFECTED BY DREDGING AND STORMY WEATHER

Dredging and stormy weather in the Mornington Peninsula area affected turbidity levels in the south of Port Phillip Bay earlier this week, Environmental Monitor Mick Bourke said today.

Mr Bourke said a monitoring buoy located south of the South East Dredge Material Ground (DMG) recorded a turbidity level above Response Level 1 at midday on Monday 3 August, 2009.

“While none of the Channel Deepening Project’s environmental limits were exceeded, stormy weather and strong winds reaching up to 100 kilometres an hour contributed to an increased amount of suspended sediment in the water,” Mr Bourke said.

“The Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) informed the Office of the Environmental Monitor (Office) that on Monday morning the *Queen of the Netherlands* placed dredged sand in the South East DMG and did not dredge again until the early afternoon,” Mr Bourke said.

Last week’s turbidity monitoring data, available at www.oem.vic.gov.au, includes turbidity readings from 27 July to 2 August 2009 and shows low turbidity across the majority of monitoring sites.

Mr Bourke said the Office had commenced an investigation into a recent non conformance by the dredging project.

“Yesterday PoMC advised that in the early hours of Monday 3 August, 2009 the barge *Resolution* made an emergency disposal of clean clay outside the areas set by the Environmental Management Plan (EMP). This resulted in a non conformance against part of EMP rule No. 34,” Mr Bourke said.

“The Office has commenced an investigation and has sought PoMC’s remedy plan for the non conformance. PoMC has confirmed that this will be provided as soon as possible and the community can expect the Office’s report on the incident to be publicly available in the coming weeks.”

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