

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

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INDEPENDENT AUDIT FINDS BAY BUND BUILT CORRECTLY

The underwater bund that holds 1.38 million cubic metres of contaminated sediment from the Port Phillip Bay dredging project was built as required, an independent audit has found.

Releasing the findings from a targeted audit today, Victoria's Environmental Monitor Mick Bourke said the bund had been built as was required by the Channel Deepening Project's rule book.

"The Environment Management Plan (EMP) has strict rules on how the bund must be constructed. These rules exist to ensure the bund is well-built and capable of securely containing the contaminated sediment, both now and into the future," Mr Bourke said.

"The independent audit commissioned by the Office of the Environmental Monitor examined a wide range of information on the bund's location, design and construction.

"The auditors inspected vessel tracking data, contaminated sediment placement plans and bathymetric surveys to compare the finished product to the approved design.

"The audit found the bund was built in accordance with all of the EMP's rules around its location, construction, equipment used and design," he said.

Mr Bourke said the audit's findings would be of interest to bayside residents because some were concerned about the bund being in 'their backyard'.

"The audit aimed to double-check the bund's integrity and the Office believes the findings provide assurance that the bund was built according to the design.

"Ongoing monitoring of the bund's integrity will occur over the coming years and the Office will continue to scrutinise information on the bund as it becomes available, and will report its findings to the project's regulators and community promptly," Mr Bourke said.

The bund, located 16 kilometres west of Mordialloc, was built in stages over several months and involved constructing walls from dredged uncontaminated clay, followed by the placement of contaminated sediment from the north of Port Phillip Bay and the Yarra River. The contaminated sediment in the bund must be capped by a layer of clean sand. The end product is a five-sided, 5.8 kilometre perimeter underwater bund.

Images of the bund can be viewed at www.oem.vic.gov.au.

Mr Bourke said the findings from a separate audit designed to independently verify the sand-capping layer and confirm that it had been applied correctly would be released by the Office soon.

"The EMP requires no less than half a metre of clean sand to be placed on top of the contaminated sediment. This work ended last month and the audit will check that the job has been done right."

Mr Bourke also said turbidity levels in Port Phillip Bay remained below the project's environmental limits last week.

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