

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

Wednesday 26 August, 2009

TURBIDITY LEVELS LOW

Turbidity in Port Phillip Bay has begun to return to background levels.

Discussing the latest results from the weekly Turbidity Monitoring Program today, Director of the Office of the Environmental Monitor (Office) Don Hough said turbidity levels across the Bay stayed below the project's environmental safeguards last week.

"The latest monitoring program results showed that turbidity levels in the north and south of the Bay were below all of the dredging project's Response Levels and environmental limits," Mr Hough said.

Turbidity results released today cover a seven day period from 17 to 23 August, 2009 and can be viewed at www.oem.vic.gov.au/Turbiditymonitoring.

Mr Hough said that following the *Queen's* departure, the Office expected to see turbidity in the Bay continue to reduce over the next week.

"More than a year and a half of turbidity monitoring data has shown that both dredging and environmental conditions can affect turbidity levels in the Bay," Mr Hough said.

"The large amount of data generated from the monitoring program has shown that cloudy water caused by dredging does dissipate once dredging stops. It's also shown that strong winds and storm water run-off can affect the amount of sediment suspended in the water.

"The turbidity levels should return to background levels soon, but could naturally rise and fall with weather conditions.

"As always, the Office will continue to scrutinise turbidity data until it returns to background levels," Mr Hough said.

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