

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

Wednesday, 2 September, 2009

TURBIDITY MONITORING PROGRAM TO END

Environmental Monitor Mick Bourke today confirmed that monitoring of turbidity levels in Port Phillip Bay will soon end, in line with Channel Deepening Project's rule book.

Mr Bourke said the Office of the Environmental Monitor had received notification from the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) signalling the upcoming closure of the turbidity monitoring program.

"The rulebook required turbidity levels in the Bay and the lower Yarra River to be monitored continuously during works by the ocean going dredge vessels," Mr Bourke said.

"Dredging in the Yarra River by the remaining ocean going dredge vessel is scheduled to be completed by midnight Friday 4 September 2009 and once data from the monitoring program shows that turbidity has returned to background levels, PoMC can begin shutting down the 20 monitoring buoys."

Mr Bourke said turbidity monitoring data would continue to be released until the program's closure, scheduled to occur by the end of September 2009.

"The community can view all past and present turbidity monitoring data at www.oem.vic.gov.au/Turbiditymonitoring," he said.

Mr Bourke said the latest turbidity monitoring results for the period 24 to 30 August 2009 showed low turbidity across the majority of Bay monitoring sites.

"A rise at two monitoring buoys located south of the South East Dredge Material Ground and near Mornington were due to strong north-westerly winds," Mr Bourke said.

"While a rise did occur, turbidity levels remained below the project's Response Levels and environmental limits. Beyond the effect of dredging, eighteen months of turbidity data has shown that strong winds and storm water run-off can affect the amount of sediment suspended in the water," he said.

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