

# Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

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Friday, 20 June, 2008

## **INDEPENDENT REVIEW FINDS NO NON-CONFORMANCES BY THE CHANNEL DEEPENING PROJECT**

An independent review on the environmental performance of the first quarter of the Channel Deepening Project (the Project) has identified no non-conformances against the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), Environmental Monitor, Mick Bourke announced today.

Releasing the Office of the Environmental Monitor's (the Office) first quarterly review today, Mr Bourke said that after carefully digesting a wide range of information on the Project, the Office had found no non-conformances by the Project or the Port of Melbourne Corporation against the EMP or rule book.

"The quarterly review is a stocktake of the Office's activities, including our findings and identified opportunities for improvement for the first quarter of the Project, up to 31 May 2008," Mr Bourke said.

"During the first quarter of the Project, the Office placed significant importance on meeting with the wide range of stakeholders, community organisations and individuals interested in the Project and these meetings proved very useful in developing our information processes and helping direct our resources and activities to the most appropriate areas of the Project.

"The Office can report that during the first quarter, PoMC delivered the Project in accordance with the 58 Project Delivery Standards set out in the rule book. The Project Delivery Standards are rules about when, where and how the Project is carried out.

"Furthermore, results from turbidity, bay water quality and several Baywide Monitoring Programs were well below the limits set out in the rule book or were within the range of variability expected based on historical data."

"However, I emphasise that the Project is still in its early days and therefore, my Office will remain vigilant in keeping a close watch on the Project and the Port of Melbourne Corporation and will report any underperformances to the community immediately."

Mr Bourke said the Office was satisfied with PoMC's performance against the 58 Project Delivery Standards in the first quarter.

"The Office considers it has a duty to contribute to the continuous improvement approach that underpins the Project and PoMC's implementation of it," Mr Bourke said.

"We think people would be surprised if we didn't do this. Therefore, we have identified six opportunities for improvement and some of these relate to PoMC as well as other Project stakeholders, including the Office.

"These opportunities include making sure the Project's audits, reviews and monitoring programs remain aligned to a changing dredging schedule as well as assisting the community through the provision of information on naturally occurring bay phenomena such as the washing up of crab shells on beaches and a list of events that may occur in the future.

“These opportunities aim to contribute to the Project’s continuous improvement approach and do not affect the Office’s conclusions.”

Mr Bourke said that under its terms of reference the Office was required to prepare quarterly reports for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

“While the quarterly reviews are a requirement of the Office, they are in addition to the targeted investigations we have and will continue to conduct during the Project – investigations that help inform our judgement of the overall environmental performance of the Project,” Mr Bourke said.

“The Victorian community can be assured that the Office has been watching the Project and PoMC very closely and if there was something of concern we would have raised it immediately. We wouldn’t hold on to it for the quarterly review.

“The Office appreciates the time and interest of stakeholders, community groups and individuals who have contributed to our activities. We intend to discuss our findings with them and we welcome feedback on our first quarter review.

The Office provides an around-the-clock independent and transparent view on the environmental performance of the Channel Deepening Project.

A copy of the quarterly review can be downloaded from the Office of the Environmental Monitor web site [www.oem.vic.gov.au](http://www.oem.vic.gov.au)

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