

Media release

From the Office of the Environmental Monitor

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TURBIDITY RESULTS IN LINE WTH RULE BOOK

Last week's wet and windy weather caused turbidity levels in the south of Port Phillip Bay to fluctuate slightly, dredging Environmental Monitor, Mick Bourke, said today.

Mr Bourke said that although the amount of suspended material in the water rose and fell, the highest turbidity recording was still well under the environmental limit.

"The Office has made a preliminary examination of the latest turbidity monitoring results and is satisfied the Channel Deepening Project has not breached turbidity limits," Mr Bourke said.

"Data from 11 conformance turbidity monitoring meters operating in the north and south of the Bay indicate turbidity levels remain well below the environmental safeguards set to protect the Bay's plants and animals."

Mr Bourke said the Office met with the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) late last week to confirm the actions being taken by it to ensure the turbidity monitoring network was not vulnerable to further equipment breakdowns or data gaps.

"The Office held a lengthy discussion with PoMC regarding the performance of the turbidity monitoring program, following a recent short breakdown of two conformance turbidity monitoring meters located in the south of the Bay," Mr Bourke said.

"My colleagues and I are satisfied that PoMC is fully aware of the need to properly manage and maintain the turbidity monitoring program so that it can provide valuable and timely information on the Bay's health to the community.

"The Office expects to have formal written confirmation of the outcomes of our discussion with PoMC in the coming week.

"Considering the volume of data being collected by the agencies running the 20 plus monitoring programs, the occasional break-down of mechanical equipment will occur.

"What's vital is that when this occurs, immediate response and action must be taken to ensure the effectiveness of the monitoring program is maintained to protect the health of the Bay.

"The Office will continue to pay close attention to the way gaps in monitoring data are addressed by the agencies running the programs," he said.

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

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