

5 February 2008

## **Environmental Management Plan approved**

The Environmental Management Plan (EMP), the 'rule book' for the Channel Deepening Project, has been given the green light.

Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) today received the Federal Government approval for the EMP, which details the environmental protections for Port Phillip Bay during the Channel Deepening Project.

The EMP is the culmination of a rigorous assessment process and puts in place a most stringent set of environmental controls that all project work in the bay must comply with.

PoMC welcomed today's decision by the Federal Minister for Environment, Mr Peter Garrett, giving the final approval required for the EMP. This now means PoMC can proceed with the project beginning with dredging in the north of the bay as scheduled on or after 7 am on Thursday 7 February 2008.

The Federal Minister's approval of the 127 page document follows that of the Victorian Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Mr Gavin Jennings, late last year.

"This EMP is the project's governance document and the culmination of an exhaustive assessment process over four years that has included expert and regulatory analysis, an independent Inquiry review and public scrutiny," said Mr Stephen Bradford, PoMC Chief Executive Officer.

"The overarching level of environmental control combined with the wide range of baywide monitoring programs sees this EMP represent the most stringent in the world," said Mr Bradford.

"The safeguards built into the EMP protect the assets of the bay, and people can have full confidence in the levels of environmental compliance and the significant public review process that PoMC is obligated to comply with."

The EMP details the environmental management requirements of the project. It sets out the:

- Project delivery standards, including environmental controls and limits
- Monitoring programs and post construction requirements (e.g. inspections)
- Regulatory controls and reporting procedures
- Contractor and communication measures

For turbidity monitoring, hi-tech environmental measures will be in place. A network of fixed monitoring buoys will record turbidity readings at designated locations around the bay. This will be used to monitor compliance with limits designed to protect the environment.

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To monitor airborne noise, readings will be taken from various locations around the bay to confirm that State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) N-1 requirements are adhered to. Underwater noise monitoring will be conducted to ensure levels are consistent with modelling.

The EMP also comprises 13 baywide monitoring programs and detailed work methods to provide broader information on the status of key species, habitats and ecological processes in the bay. The programs will focus on fish stocks in the bay, water quality, little penguins, nutrient cycling, plume intensity, contaminants in fish, algal bloom, Ramsar wetlands and seagrass.

The programs involve the use of various monitoring methods such as satellite imagery, aerial photography, sampling for laboratory analysis, individual site monitoring, data collection, surveys, field measurements and mapping.

The dredging schedule for the Channel Deepening Project will be published on the dedicated website [www.channelproject.com](http://www.channelproject.com) and will be updated on the commencement of dredging.

Mr Bradford said the independent environmental monitor will provide advice on dredging, in accordance with the thresholds outlined in EMP, and in line with this, PoMC will maintain consistent reporting procedures.

Last year, the EMP was publicly presented in conjunction with the SEES and revisions were assessed by the independent SEES Inquiry.

Mr Bradford said following discussions with the Commonwealth Department, PoMC had reviewed the EMP accordingly and had incorporated the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (Cwlth)*, where relevant, into the EMP.

PoMC has further refined reporting and notification procedures and the monitoring measures within Ramsar listed areas and clarified the process of dredged material management.

Mr Bradford said in order to ensure that the EMP, and associated limits and controls were adhered to, a series of inspections, audits, reviews and importantly, independent monitoring programs will be conducted throughout the course of the project. He said PoMC confirmed the budget of \$969 million for the whole project.

The EMP is now available on the web. To view the EMP, please visit the Channel Deepening Project website [www.channelproject.com](http://www.channelproject.com)

***\* As from the commencement of dredging the Port will hold a Project News Conference each morning at 10 am (Monday-Friday) Level 4 530 Collins Street Melbourne to advise on dredging activities from the previous 24 hours and planned activities across the next 24 hours.***