



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG /17

5 February 2008

PORT PHILLIP BAY ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVED

I have today approved a strengthened Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Port Phillip Bay Channel Deepening project.

Following extensive consultation, the Port of Melbourne Corporation has revised its plan to meet the 16 conditions of my approval on 20 December last year.

I am satisfied that my approval will give the protection required to the matters for which I am responsible – those of national environmental significance including Ramsar wetlands, migratory and threatened species and Commonwealth land.

In strengthening the EMP, I have required new monitoring of water and tidal currents at the containment area, to verify and regularly report to the public that contaminants remain secure.

In addition, the dredge must operate in non-overflow mode so that no contaminated sediment can escape the dredge hopper.

Overall, I have required more monitoring, more often.

I have required that the results of this monitoring be made publicly available.

If at any time the strict environmental limits required by the EMP are triggered, the Port must report to me and dredging must stop.

Work will not be able to begin again without my approval.

The EMP stipulates that the Port of Melbourne must report both quarterly and annually against the standards set out in the plan. These reports will now be made public.

As a result of this extensive monitoring and public reporting, the people of Victoria will know more about the environmental health of Port Phillip Bay than ever before.

The Port of Melbourne has confirmed that it will publish the environmental management plan on its web site before dredging begins.