



# Community Information Session - Cherry Creek/Lake

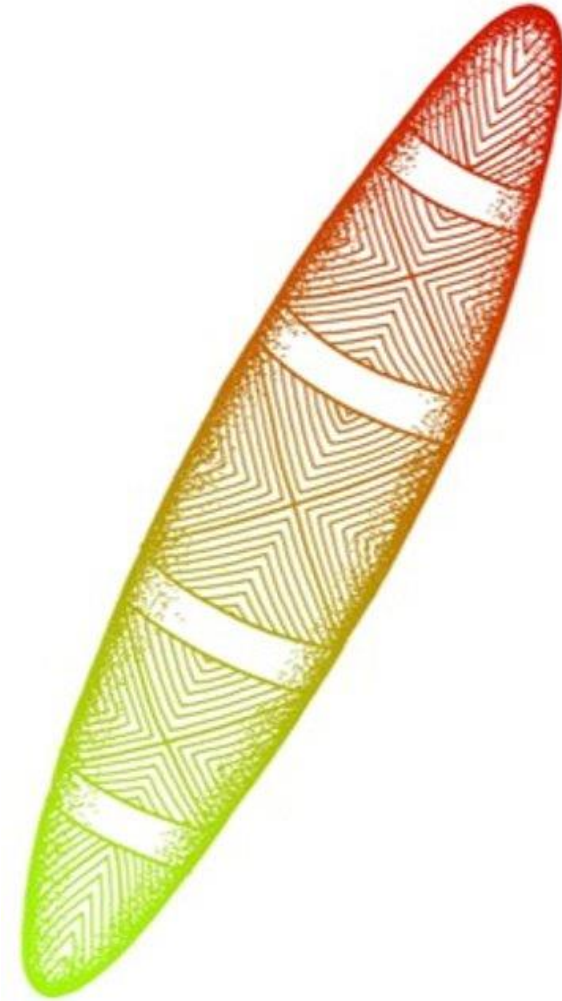
22 March 2022

Facilitator, Liz Pommer

# **Liz Pommer**

Facilitator

# Acknowledgement





## Agenda

- EPA CEO update
- EPA Western Metropolitan Regional Manager update
- Melbourne Water update
- EPA Science team update
- Community Q & A
- Next steps

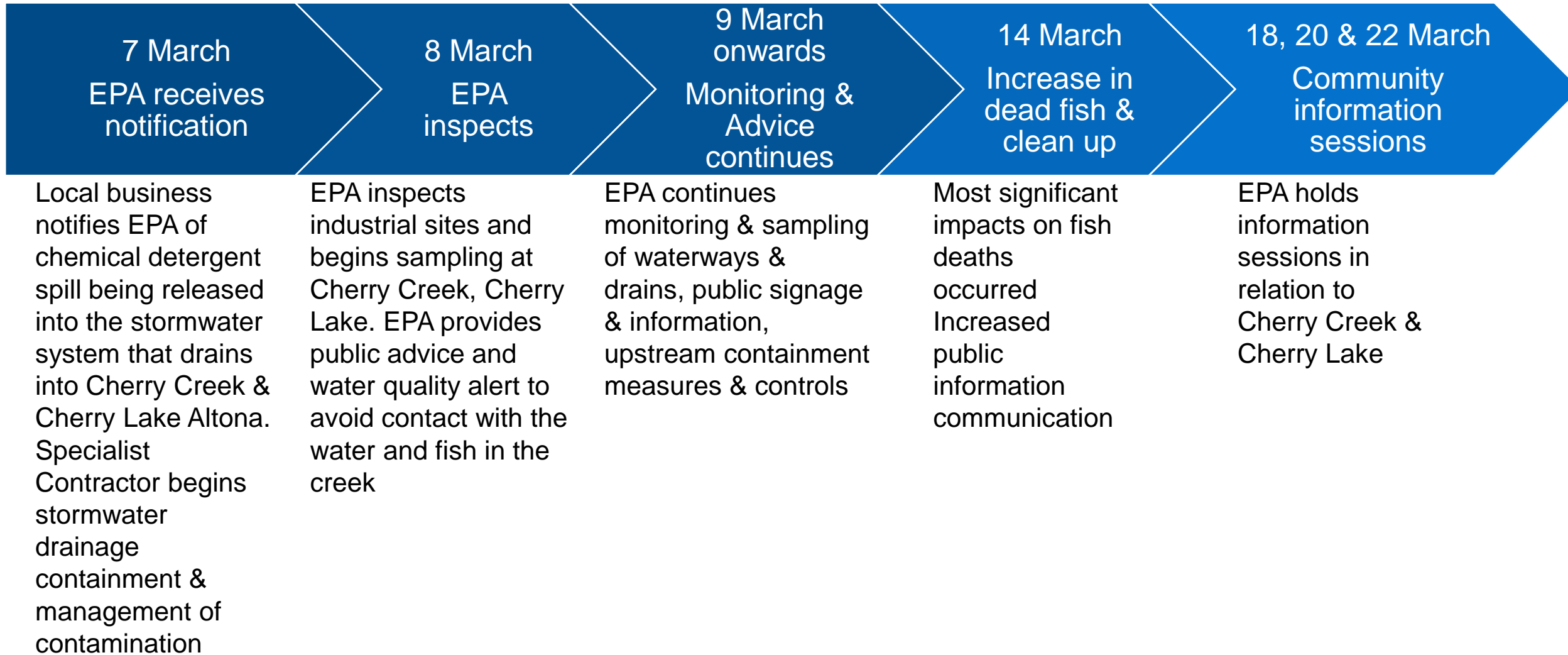
**Lee Miezis**  
CEO, EPA

# **Steve Lansdell**

Regional Manager, West  
Metropolitan Region, EPA



## Timeline of events



# Roles & Responsibilities

## Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

- Leading incident management, pollution response, regulation & public health advice

## Melbourne Water (MW)

- Leading fish kill clean up, interim stormwater clean up & pumping of contaminated water to sewer options

## Greater Western Water (GWW)

- Supporting the operations to pump contaminated water to sewer

## Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC)

- Supporting clean up and communications

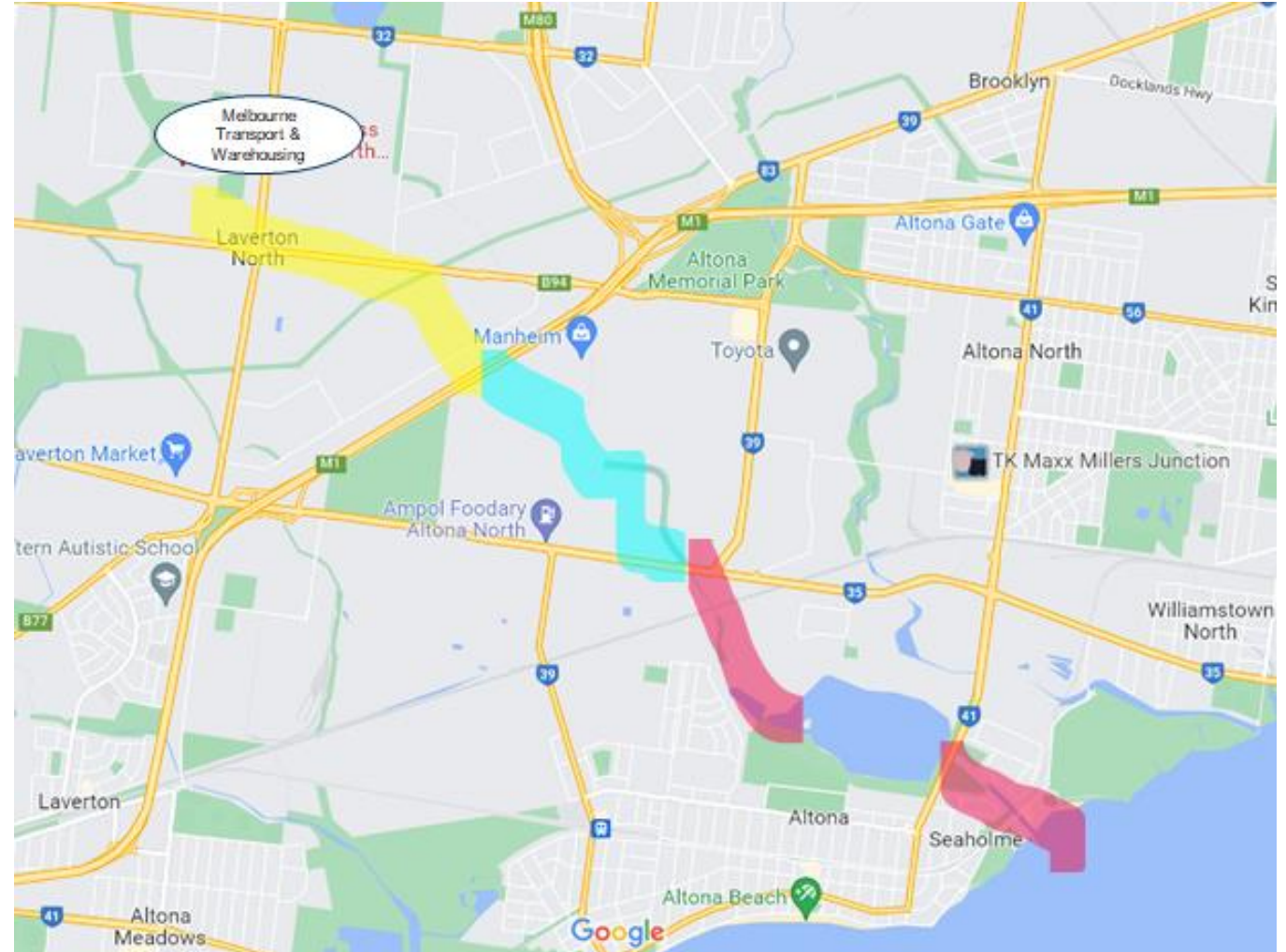
## WorkSafe (WS)

- Jointly regulating the industrial site to ensure risks are prevented & compliance & enforcement actions taken



## What do we know?

- *Oval shape* = chemical spill from factory in Laverton North, compliance & enforcement, bunding & containment (EPA & WS).
- *Yellow* = underground storm water drainage, majority of the contamination contained through sandbags, eduction & retarding basin (MW).
- *Blue* = open channel of Cherry Creek. Working to contain and direct waste to sewer (MW & GWW).
- *Red* = environmental monitoring & public advice (EPA), large-scale dead fish & clean-up (MW).



## Current focus

- Continue monitoring & public advice to prevent harm
- Coordinating clean up & management
- Transitioning to recovery & restoration
- Coordinating regulatory actions & enforcement investigation
- Working with the community



## Next Steps

- *Now & ongoing* – monitoring, clean up, community information through webpage, socials & community meetings
- *Next week* – confirm clean up plan required of the duty holder & those needed from partner agencies
- *Coming week(s)* – develop & plan restorative & recovery approaches with local community & those impacted, undertake formal incident debrief & review
- *Ongoing* – hold polluter to account & use any learnings to educate broader industry & target preventative compliance & enforcement programs

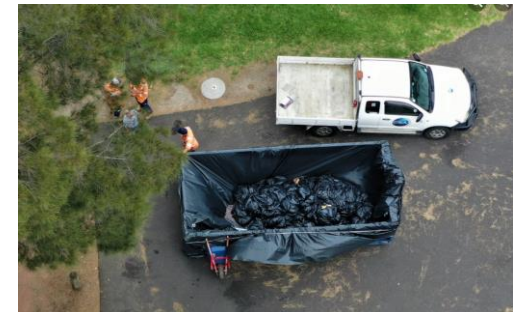


# **Ben English**

Team Leader, Regional  
Services, North West Region,  
Melbourne Water

# Melbourne Water Response

- Melbourne Water is continuing to assist EPA with the clean up operation at Humes Drain, Cherry Creek and Cherry Lake.
- Melbourne Water's response has focussed on:
  - Dead fish removal from Cherry Lake; and
  - Containing and removing as much polluted water as possible from Humes Drain and Cherry Creek before it enters Cherry Lake.



# Melbourne Water Response

## Dead Fish Removal

- Our focus at Cherry Lake has been dead fish removal.
- Approximately 15 tonnes of dead fish, overwhelmingly carp, have been removed from the lake and taken to a licensed facility for disposal.
- A small number were removed upstream and downstream of the lake.
- The dead fish removal has been ongoing since Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March with a significant escalation in the numbers of dead fish observed across the 14/15<sup>th</sup> March.
- Melbourne Water's efforts ramped up to remove and dispose of the greater numbers of dead fish from the 16<sup>th</sup> March.
- Most of the dead fish have now been removed.
- Melbourne Water will continue to inspect the lake twice daily and remove any further fish as required.

# Melbourne Water Response

## **Containment and Removal of Polluted Water**

- Containment efforts have focussed on a retarding basin approximately 300m downstream from the incident location to prevent further polluted water entering Humes Drain and Cherry Creek.
- A number of sandbag bunds have also been installed on Humes Drain and Cherry Creek to contain flows.
- Melbourne Water has pumped approximately 3,000,000 litres of polluted water to sewer from Humes Drain and Cherry Creek since 17<sup>th</sup> March.
- This pumping has occurred to prevent polluted water from reaching Cherry Lake.
- Pumping and containment continues around the clock on Humes Drain to minimise any further polluted water entering the creek and lake.
- Pumping and containment will continue as required as part of the clean up plan.

# **Prof. Mark Taylor**

Chief Environmental Scientist,  
EPA

# What we've found in the water

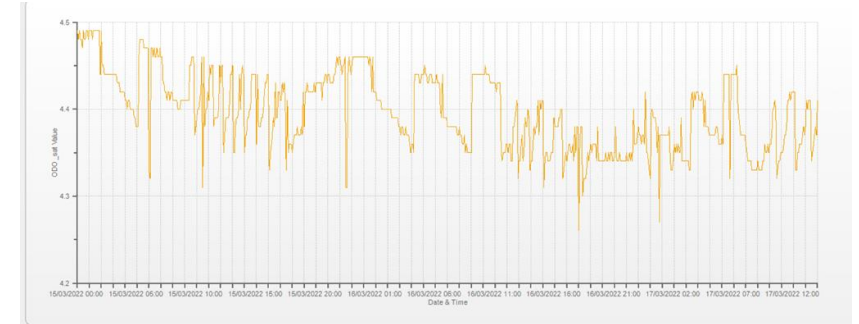
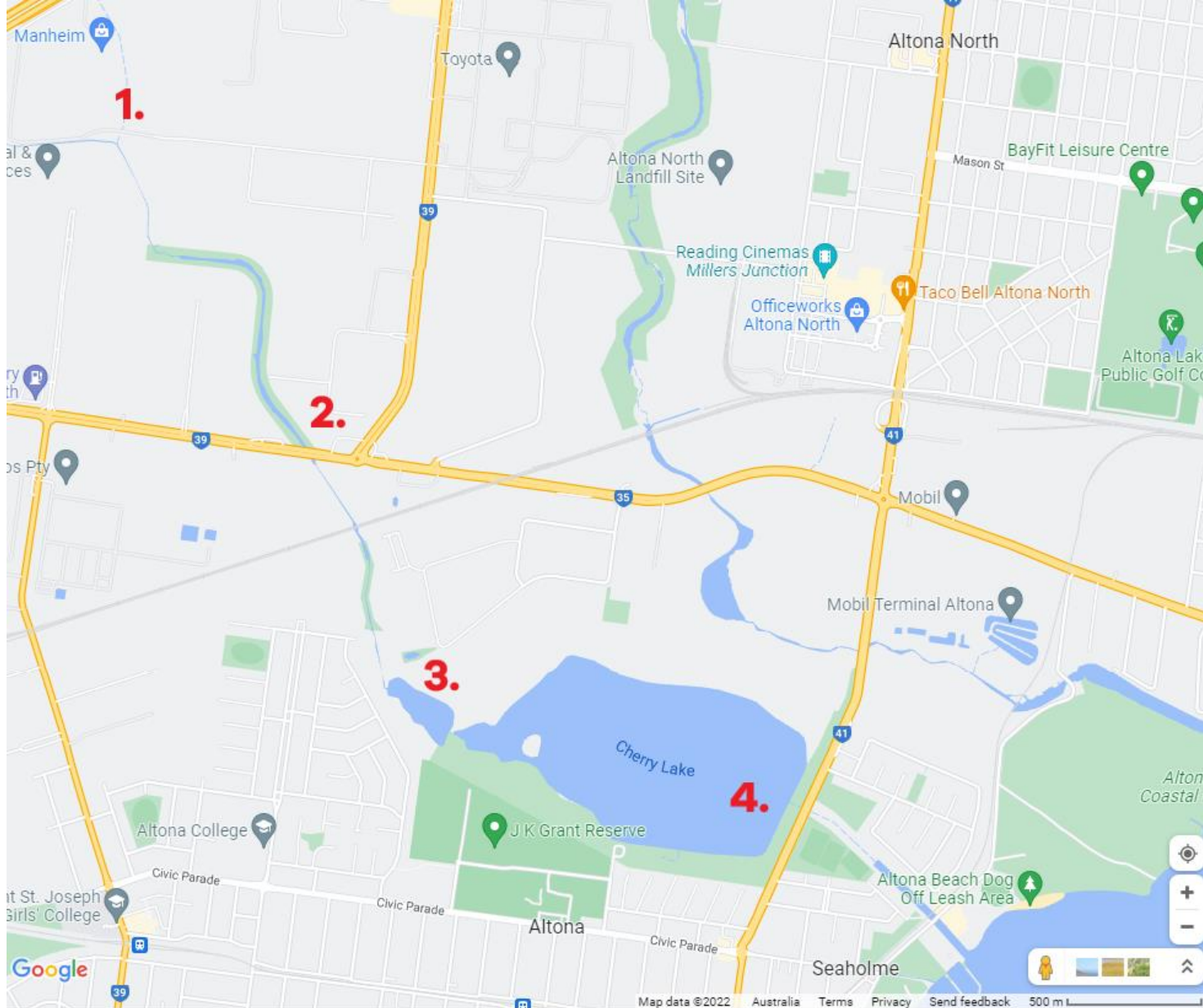
## Teric N9

- Main ingredient is **nonylphenol ethoxylate** (NPE)
- Used in shampoos, cosmetics, cleaning products and has many industrial uses
- Very toxic to fish
- High concentrations lead to loss of oxygen



Source: [abc.net.au/news](http://abc.net.au/news)

# Current water quality



# Ongoing impacts



- NPE will degrade with sunlight, oxygen and bacteria
- We are investigating the by-products of NPE
- Further work required to understand NPE in the sediments of Cherry Creek and Lake

# Precautionary Health Advice



- Fish are decomposing and may be sources of bacteria and parasites
- Teric N9 is a detergent, concentrated may cause skin irritation, eye damage and is harmful if swallowed however has been significantly diluted in the Lake
- Key health messages:
  - Do not eat or collect (touch) the fish
  - Do not let your pets eat or collect the fish
  - Avoid contact with the water, it may cause skin irritation in individuals sensitive to detergents
- Signs will remain up until water quality is suitable for recreation



# Questions?



# Who to contact

**EPA** – Pollution response, public health advice, media enquiries  
1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842)  
[contact@epa.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@epa.vic.gov.au)

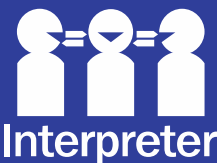
**Melbourne Water** – Fish kill clean up & waterway management  
131 722

**Hobsons Bay City Council** – local assets & support  
1300 179 944  
[customerservice@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](mailto:customerservice@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)



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1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC)  
[epa.vic.gov.au](http://epa.vic.gov.au)



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