

# Fact sheet:

## Bore water use in Edithvale, Chelsea and Bonbeach



Environment  
Protection  
Authority Victoria



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Community information

Groundwater testing along the rail corridor in Edithvale, Chelsea and Bonbeach has shown elevated levels of some contaminants.

### Should I be concerned about my health?

If you do not use groundwater at your property you have not come into contact with this water.

There are many areas of Melbourne where the groundwater is not suitable for drinking, irrigation or recreational use. More information on contaminated groundwater locations and restrictions can be found at [www.environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/victoria-unearthed](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/victoria-unearthed).

If you use groundwater from a bore at your property for drinking, irrigation of crops or recreational use (for example, filling a pool) and would like more information on reducing your exposure to the groundwater please contact EPA on 1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC).

If you are concerned about your health, please consult with your local medical practitioner.

### What is groundwater?

Groundwater is water that collects or flows beneath the soil surface, filling the porous spaces in soil, sand, clay and rocks. In this area, shallow groundwater depth is known to be between 1 m and 6 m below ground surface.

Groundwater is accessed using a bore.

### Do we drink groundwater?

All residential and business premises in this area are connected to water mains which source drinking water supply from surface water (rivers, streams and reservoirs). This water is unaffected and remains suitable to drink.

However, if you use a groundwater bore at your property you should not be drinking water from your bore.

Information on the use of groundwater for drinking water supply is available on the Department of Health and Human Services website [www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/water/alternative-water-supplies/groundwater](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/water/alternative-water-supplies/groundwater).

All businesses and community groups that rely on a private water supply, such as bores and dams, for drinking (potable) water must take all reasonable precautions to ensure the water is safe for human consumption. Water used for drinking or for cleaning of tableware or appliances used in food preparation must be potable by law.

The Department of Health maintains guidelines that can assist food businesses to ensure that their water supply is safe for food preparation and human consumption. These guidelines are available from: [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/bus/safe.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/bus/safe.htm).

### Further information

Contact EPA on  
1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC) or  
[contact@epa.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@epa.vic.gov.au)

[www.epa.vic.gov.au/bore-water](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/bore-water)



## Bore water use in Edithvale, Chelsea and Bonbeach

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### How many bores are in this area?

There are 19 registered domestic and stock groundwater bores in the ground monitoring survey zone.

### What responsibilities do I have as a bore owner?

Bore owners are responsible for making sure the bore water they use is fit for the intended use.

If you are using your bore water for growing vegetables, fruit or you have chickens, you may wish to consider getting your bore water tested.

For more information about having your bore tested please contact EPA on 1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC) or visit our dedicated webpage at [www.epa.vic.gov.au/bore-water](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/bore-water).

### How does groundwater become polluted?

Groundwater pollution is usually the result of poor environmental care and practice, particularly in heavily populated industrial areas. Potential groundwater pollution is identified through a range of activities and programs that EPA regulates, including Victoria's environmental audit system.

Elevated concentrations of some metals found in groundwater may be representative of natural background conditions.

Polluted groundwater is usually a long-term environmental legacy.

Poor practices that have resulted in groundwater pollution include the poor storage, or disposal, of liquid to land and leaking underground storage tanks, which with time have become mixed with the groundwater. At surface level, pollution can occur when rain mixes with chemicals, which can then move through the soil and into the groundwater.

### What contaminants have been seen in groundwater testing in this area?

Contaminants reported in the groundwater mean the groundwater is not suitable for drinking. They are both industrial and naturally occurring. Chemicals identified included low levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and heavy metals (arsenic, nickel, lead and selenium) which in some areas were above the drinking water guidelines.

Heavy metals can be from industrial activities or due to the natural geology of the area. They stay in the environment for a long time and can be harmful in large amounts.

Many fuel sources such as coal, petroleum and natural gas are hydrocarbons.

PFAS are a group of manufactured chemicals which have been used in industrial activities and are present in many products such as carpets and clothes.

### What is the source of the contamination?

EPA is currently investigating potential sources of contamination in the area.

Pollution of groundwater needs to be cleaned up or otherwise managed. Where sites are identified that are contributing to the pollution of the groundwater in the area, EPA will require site assessment, cleanup and ongoing management.

All EPA compliance and enforcement activity is undertaken in line with the *Compliance and Enforcement Policy*, which is available at [www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/publications/1388-3](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/publications/1388-3).

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In some cases, it is not practicable to clean up groundwater so that the groundwater is suitable for all beneficial uses (within a reasonable time). In these situations, EPA will:

1. Identify a groundwater quality restricted use zone as a means of tracking the presence of pollution and the restriction on the use of groundwater.
2. Require pollution of groundwater to be cleaned up to the extent that is practicable. This may include management of the residual pollution in a manner commensurate to the risk posed.
3. Not approve certain activities within the zone where those activities have the potential to make the condition of groundwater worse.
4. Require the practicability of groundwater cleanup to be periodically reassessed. For example, where a new technology becomes available to make cleanup practicable and the risk posed by the polluted groundwater warrants it, EPA may require further cleanup.

### **Will I come in contact with groundwater if I don't have a bore?**

No. The groundwater in the area ranges between 1 m and 6 m below ground level. If you do not have a groundwater bore or you are not using your bore you will not come into contact with the groundwater in your everyday activities.

### **Are you concerned about schools or golf courses in the area who may use this water for irrigation?**

No. EPA has confirmed there are no registered irrigation bores in the area.

### **Are you concerned about properties in the area that may be using the bore water for agricultural purposes?**

No. EPA has confirmed there are no registered irrigation bores in the area.

### **Where can I find out further information about groundwater and bores?**

For more information visit our dedicated webpage at [www.epa.vic.gov.au/bore-water](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/bore-water).