Cup Weekend: Closed and Polluted Beaches – Is this Victoria's future?

This Sunday, Cup weekend, beachgoers on the Mornington Peninsula were confronted with what may well become increasingly regular events – beaches so polluted, they are unsafe to use.

For the past two weeks the advice from Melbourne Water is not engage in any recreational activities including swimming and surfing at or near the iconic Gunnamatta surf beach, Mornington Peninsula National Park.

Poorly treated waste has been dumped near the popular surfing beach, making the coastline and its waters unsafe for the last two weeks. Heavy rains that have caused flooding in Melbourne also caused the Eastern Treatment Plant (ETP)to fail. The ETP processes sewage from more than half of Melbourne's population.

With Melbourne's population set to double by 2050 and the impacts of climate change to increase in severity, Clean Ocean Foundation's CEO asks, "Is this to be the future of our beaches – dumping grounds for human waste when waste water treatment fails?"

"Without a major commitment to upgrade our waste water infrastructure, these events will damage our precious marine environment, state's reputation for clean beaches, tourism as well as the health and wellbeing of its recreational users."

"These event highlights another oversight of the recently adopted Victorian Water Strategy, which also fails to properly consider the effective use water recycling in times of water shortages."

"We need to have a serious discussion about what we need to do with our water and waste water both in times of flood and drought where all practical solutions are on the table."

Footage of discharge from Eastern Treatment Plant here or available on request:

https://www.instagram.com/tv/CjuJnt9rqd3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Clean Ocean Clean Water Policy

https://www.cleanocean.org/cocw-victorian.html

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