

# Seaford Wetland Development



**Project**  
Seaford Wetland Development

**Location**  
Melbourne

**Client**  
New Dimension Homes

**Start Date**  
May 2004

**End Date**  
December 2004

New Dimension Homes proposed a residential development on existing vacant land zoned Residential in the Victorian Planning Scheme. The development was challenged by a local non-governmental organisation and the Council, due to its proximity to a Ramsar wetland. The case went to the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal for a hearing to decide whether the plans should be approved.

AES was asked to do an environmental impact assessment for the site's ecological values, with particular attention to Seaford Wetlands, part of the Edithvale-Seaford Ramsar site including areas that could be considered part of the Ramsar site 'buffer' zone.

Development at the edge of Ramsar sites is a requirement for consideration under State planning policy and is also required under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. In this case, the development was referred to the Federal Minister for comment and the final decision was delayed pending the VCAT hearing.

AES did site-based fieldwork and reviewed all existing knowledge of the Ramsar site from reports describing its ecology and hydrology, including spatial and temporal changes in water quality and salinity over time, as a consequence of management intervention. A complete assessment of ecological values was done, along with an impact and risk assessment of specific construction and operational aspects of the proposed development. A management plan was also written, so that residual impacts could be concluded.

The information gathered for the process was heard at VCAT and the development was approved by the State and Federal authorities.

