



Sandringham Yacht Club head coach Riccardo Deghi and 18-year-old Emmie Frederico (below) demonstrate how easy it is to get trapped in the sludge.
Pictures: PENNY STEPHENS

OOZER PAYS: \$250,000 TO BUDGE THE SLUDGE

SANDRINGHAM'S despised shoreline black sludge will be gone by summer after the state government announced it would spend \$250,000 to remove the beach ooze.

The accumulation of organic material, including seagrass and seaweeds, has been a problem for several years. But 12 months ago, the sludge was recognised as a safety issue because it trapped beach walkers, children and dogs in its deep, gooey pits.

In November, there were fears

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the coveted Australian, Oceania and World Laser championships to be held in January-February 2020 at Sandringham Yacht Club could be scuttled if the ooze wasn't cleared.

The Parks Victoria clean-up operation — which involves contractors removing the sludge by dredging and disposing it in marine environment to the west of the breakwater — is set to begin in the coming weeks.

A “beachfront grooming project” to “regenerate the vitality of the popular destination” will commence once the sludge is dredged.

Sandringham Yacht Club chief executive Richard Hewett said removing the sludge was a “great outcome for the community”.

“The Sandringham Harbour as a result of the sludge removal will make going into the water safe and far more pleasant,” he said.

A Parks Victoria study found the tidal movements allowed the

organic material to collect in significant quantities.

Although the sludge stinks, it was found to be non-toxic.

Southern Metropolitan Labor member Nina Taylor said Sandringham Harbour would be “sludge free” by summer. “The removal of this sludge represents a significant step to resolving an issue that has been blighting Sandringham Harbour,” she said.

