

Canberra Correspondent

December 2018

It's not every day that I congratulate South Australian Senators Sarah Hanson-Young and Rex Patrick, but today was one of them. They have ensured that a formerly secret document the Government went to a lot of trouble to keep 'under wraps' has been made public.

I feel vindicated and believe that many of you should also feel that you've ended the year on a high.

For me it was the fact that the Ernst and Young (October 2017) Internal Audit Report: Assessing Risks Associated with Environmental Water Delivery Services, report has finally seen the light of day

Despite ad attachment still missing, it highlights where a spotlight urgently needs to be shone and is the latest chapter in a long running saga many of us have played a role in delivering.

A key finding of the EY Report is:

'the risk of achievement of the CEWH's obligations appears highest in South Australia'

This document is attached [Here](#) and has come out of the Senate Estimate hearing.

As you can read in the other document I have attached which is the Australian Institute's report released today (Friday 21st December) – 'Coorong don't make a right' [Here](#) – the fight to get hold of this document has been a long one involving numerous Fol's, Parliamentary motions and Committee work.

Do yourself a favour and read both documents.

Whilst I feel vindicated, I remain incredibly annoyed that the focus of recent times has been on what occurs in NSW and not what happens in the State which the CEWH has identified as the the highest risk and the State which lacks transparency.

We need to get these reports out far and wide and start really questioning exactly what is happening with the management of environmental water, especially down at the bottom end.

From the discussions I've had, it remains unclear what the funds announced at MinCo for the Lower Lakes and Coorong are for.

[The Gaudian](#) has picked up the story and it is reaching an audience who are not usually receptive to what many of us have to say.

I am prepared to give you better than even odds that 2019 is going to be another vintage year of games from those at the Authority and the other agencies and departments at a State and Federal level.

I predict there will be more meetings that you care to attend and you'll be swamped with reports and documents written in Bureaucratese and will have to deal with public servants in key positions who are incompetent, condescending or lack basic knowledge.

2019 is also a year chock full of legislative deadlines I believe can't be met. However, departments will give it a crack and some Speak Up members on numerous committees will have their workloads increased exponentially. It'll be more important than ever we touch base on a regular basis to swap intel.

2019 will in all probability bring us a change of government and new Federal Minister and potentially a new NSW Minister. The Federal ASLP Shadow Minister has made some interesting statements of late and if you haven't read their plans for the environment you should. The EPB&C Act is a dog's breakfast and with an increased bureaucracy concentrating on writing new plans it won't necessarily be useful or wanted.

Given our calls for transparency around decision making instead of trying to second guess exactly what was decided at MinCo meetings we should be demanding Ministers come together and front river communities early in the new year to explain the MinCo communique and what it means for people on the ground.

There are still a mountain of reports to get through and I appreciate that people are busy, however I cannot stress enough of the importance of the two attached reports. It is a nice feeling being vindicated occasionally.

Have a safe Christmas and remember if you can't be good at least be good at it!

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