



**SENATOR SARAH HANSON-YOUNG**  
Australian Greens' Senator for South Australia

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Mr Grant Hehir  
Auditor-General  
Australian National Audit Office  
GPO Box 707  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Hehir

**Yeelirrie uranium mine**

I write to request an audit of the approval of the Yeelirrie uranium mine by the Federal Government in 2019.

I refer you to the investigation into the approval of the mine reported by the ABC on its 730 program on 13 January 2021 and online today.

The report outlines a number of deeply concerning issues in relation to the mines approval including:

- The approval by former federal environment minister Melissa Price was made on the eve of the 2019 Federal Election, the night before the government went into caretaker mode;
- On 10 April at 9.31pm, the night before the election was called, Ms Price was emailed the complete 'decision package' containing more than 50 files and hundreds of pages. The approval is dated April 10 meaning Ms Price signed it the same night and within just hours of receiving hundreds of pages;
- The approval was made without key environmental protections strongly and repeatedly recommended by the Government's own experts;
- The mining company told federal environment department officials in 2017 a condition requiring it to demonstrate it would not cause the extinctions of rare species was 'not realistic and not likely to be achieved – ever!'. This condition was removed in the final approval;
- The foreign mining company and former resources minister Matt Canavan intervened and requested that the approval process be expedited; and
- The site of the mine is environmentally significant and a biodiversity hotspot which is at risk if this mine proceeds.

I note your report 'Referrals, Assessments and Approvals of Controlled Actions under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999' dated 25 June 2020, wherein you detail numerous failings by the Department to administer the EPBC Act including approvals of controlled actions, and suggest the Yeelirrie mine approval is a case riddled with similar failings of improper process, decisions made against Department advice and political interference and therefore worthy of examination by your office.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

**Senator Sarah Hanson-Young**  
Australian Greens Spokesperson for Environment and Water

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