

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE — MEMBERSHIP

**465. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:**

I refer to the government's proposal to rename the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee contained in the 1972 act to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee and retain the membership of the committee established under the 2021 legislation.

- (1) How many members will the committee have under the amended 1972 act?
- (2) Does the minister intend for the committee to have industry-specific representation in addition to the members already appointed?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** Good question.

**Dr A.D. BUTI replied:**

The member for Roe said "good question", but I thought the member for Roe had no idea of this area of law.

- (1)–(3) The members of the current committee under the 2021 act will of course not be forced to be members, but they will be asked. As the member knows, it is Aboriginal dominated and has Aboriginal co-chairs. We can change the number of members if need be, but it will be 12; it could be 11 or 12. In regards to industry-specific representation, no—to be a member of that committee a major aspect is to have Aboriginal descent, but that is not the only requirement. A requirement is to have specific interest and knowledge in areas that will be relevant to section 18 applications. There are people on that committee now who represent industries in mining and geology, for instance. I think someone on it might have anthropological expertise but I cannot be sure. There are people with a wide range of views. There will not be industry-specific representation because that is not what the committee is about. The committee is about looking at looking at section 18 applications under the new system and whether an Aboriginal cultural heritage site is of significance, and if there is a land proponent, whether there is a way that that can be managed in a way that will minimise damage to the significant Aboriginal cultural heritage. That is the thing I would like to point out that has been lost in this debate. Not every Aboriginal cultural site or material will necessarily be protected; it is those considered of significance. They are the ones that come under the 1972 act and will be subject to a section 18 consent process. In regards to the member's question, they will come with wide and varied expertise and practice but we will not have industry-specific representation because members are not there to represent their industry, they are there to serve the purpose of the act, which is to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage of significance, in a way that also allows a land proponent to proceed with their proposal if a proper management system is in place or there is consent to damage to the Aboriginal cultural site.