

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT — MAP VIEWER

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

I refer to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage's map viewer, which will be used to help landowners ascertain whether they have Aboriginal cultural heritage on their land.

- (1) What work is the government doing to update this map to ensure that it is accurate?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that the map contains inaccurate coordinates and sites identifying Aboriginal cultural heritage sites?
- (3) Is there or will the minister include a disclaimer on the website and map to advise that the location and coordinates of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are not accurate or definitive on the map viewer?

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

- (1)–(3) The member referred to the information on the department's website. I would advise everyone to start off by going through the directory, which has substantial information on the identification of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites in Western Australia. As I have mentioned numerous times, and even on the radio this morning, of course it is not complete, but it has substantial mapping of cultural heritage sites in Western Australia.

With regard to the member's claim of inaccurate information, I will take that up with the department, but the department is incredibly careful about what it puts on the website.

Let us just understand what is happening here. A landowner can go to the directory and have a look on the directory to see the land area that they want to utilise to see whether it has Aboriginal cultural heritage. If it does not and the landowner is doing a low-level activity, they go and do a physical inspection themselves. If they are satisfied, that is due diligence. Obviously, there may be an Aboriginal person in the vicinity whom the landowner knows about. The whole idea is to encourage consultation with Aboriginal people and to reach agreement with Aboriginal people. That is what this act is about. That is what the opposition seems to be hostile about. I do not understand that. The landowner can then ask them. Once that is done, they can continue with the activity. If there is no Aboriginal cultural heritage and the landowner has done the due diligence, they can just continue.

If a landowner is doing a tier 3 activity, which involves substantial disturbance to the land that they are utilising, that is when they may need to do a survey. They may need to do a survey if it is a tier 3. They go to the directory to do the initial survey. If it is a tier 3, they may need to do an additional survey. Many of those surveys have already been done. They can look at what has already been done. If it is an area that has not been surveyed, they may then instigate a survey. Eventually, the whole state will be surveyed.

Warren Pearce, the CEO of the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, said yesterday on ABC's *Country Hour*—opposition members want to quote certain radio interviews, but not others—that he strongly advocated for the system to start on 1 July. He said we could not delay any further. He also said that the local Aboriginal cultural heritage services would not come on board until the system is operating. That is what he said. He also said it is interesting that the Pastoralists and Graziers Association members are now protesting; where have they been? The Western Australian Farmers Federation was invited to participate in the activities category working group. Its members came to the first meeting but not the others. They were given sufficient opportunity to contribute to the design of the regulations and they chose not to. Now, at the eleventh hour, they have decided to protest—encouraged and cheered on by opposition members, who when we talk about Aboriginal issues and bring Aboriginal people on board, always just do not like it.