

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2023 — DEBATE

462. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to the tendency of the WA Labor government to use the Parliament as a rubber stamp, such as in the case of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, which was rammed through 24 hours after the initial briefing was provided to the opposition.

- (1) Will the minister guarantee the opposition will be provided with an appropriate amount of time to review the amendments to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 and that debate will not be guillotined?
- (2) Will any proposed regulations be provided prior to the bill to restore the 1972 act being debated in both houses of Parliament to ensure the full extent of the new system can be understood and considered?

The SPEAKER: Before I give the minister the call—I know he will not mind—I would like to acknowledge James Joseph David on his first visit to Parliament House. He is the number one and only grandson of the Speaker!

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I am glad I am the first member of government to reply to a question without notice in respect to the grandchild's experience in Parliament! May it be as long an experience as you have had, Madam Speaker.

- (1)–(2) On the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, a briefing was given to the opposition yesterday. We are open to providing information as needed. It is not being rammed through as an urgent bill. It is really up to the opposition how long it wants to debate the bill when it comes back on. I am sure many of the member's constituents who expressed support for the decision that was announced yesterday would like the revival of the 1972 act, with the appropriate amendments, to go through as quickly as possible, but the opposition can decide whether they want to listen to their voices or not. We have been listening to their voices.

On urgent bills, does the member think we are the only government to ever do an urgent bill? I will provide some statistics to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The former Liberal–National government, of which the member for Central Wheatbelt was a cabinet minister, declared urgent 44 bills from 2008 to 2016. It was 44 bills! Was not one of them something to do with the Town of East Fremantle, if I remember rightly? We came back one year and something about the Town of East Fremantle was considered urgent. It was because it had no other legislation. The current Labor government has declared urgent 40 bills from 2017 to now and, of those 40 bills that were declared urgent, 10 were related to COVID. If we take them out of the equation, there have been 30 urgent bills since 2017. The opposition did 44 between 2008 and 2016, so do not talk about parliamentary procedure when your hypocrisy has been determined by the statistics.