

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT — IMPLEMENTATION

381. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the impending implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act on 1 July. Has the minister sought any advice from DevelopmentWA on any impacts the ACH act may have in delivering development projects on time for Western Australia; and, if so, what extra resources are in place for the agency to deal with the new regime?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for his question. We are already clearly on the record on this issue regarding the new act. As the Premier has already indicated, we are not doing anything new. Consideration has always been given to Aboriginal cultural heritage. That is well known and that is on the record. As we have said, when there is no Aboriginal cultural heritage present, there is no need for approval. That is a fact. That is on the record. We have also said that there is a range of exemptions. I note the commentary by the opposition, which has been running a scare campaign. I believe that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs referred to the situational claims by the opposition about swimming pools. I want to be very clear about these exemptions. Under the new act, all residential properties under 1 100 square metres will be exempt. Further, regardless of the size of the residential lot, a range of activities, which I have talked about, relating to a person's home, including improvements, general maintenance and small projects, will also be exempt. For land greater than 1 100 square metres, again a permit or management plan will be required only if Aboriginal cultural heritage is present. The advice given to me, for example, is that the majority of land that is already disturbed in the metropolitan area will not be affected. Can we get this on the record loud and clear: for existing proposals and developments, developers and government agencies already have to give consideration to Aboriginal heritage. We know, for example, that we may have to negotiate an Indigenous land use agreement with native title owners. There is always a recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage. There is a clear divide. We are seeing a scare campaign by the opposition and we are hearing extraordinary statements by the opposition, and we should not accept it.