

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT — REPEAL

454. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

I refer to the public resources used to establish the Premier's now failed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act.

- (1) What has been the cost to the taxpayer of the development and implementation of this act?
- (2) Will the Premier be quantifying and compensating the costs to industry that have been incurred as a result of his government's failure?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) Obviously, some funds have been expended in relation to the implementation of the current act, but I am very pleased to say that many of those resources will be utilised as part of the ongoing program of rolling out Aboriginal cultural heritage laws in this state. Clearly, we have had a conversation that we will need to continue with the community, so I do not buy the claim that somehow resources have been completely wasted in the context of that conversation. We will continue to make sure that we work with the community and with government, utilising the resources we have, to bring about a proper heritage protection regime that encourages agreement making and to build the links between landowners and the Aboriginal communities that hold the knowledge about that Aboriginal cultural heritage. That is where we want to see this process land and where we see it in best practice up north, particularly with some of the members of our mining industry. They work tirelessly to make sure that they have strong relationships with the community on the ground so that it is a joint effort in how we manage Aboriginal cultural heritage—not a compliance act, but an act of good governance and good corporate citizenship.

The resources that industry has put in have obviously been put to good use as it continues to hone its practices, ideas and processes in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage. This is a journey that we are all on as a community. We are a community that was hurt very badly with the Juukan Gorge situation. In fact, we were a global embarrassment, so we have to do better, and that is what we are endeavouring to do. We are doing that by working closely with industry, the community, stakeholders and Aboriginal communities specifically. Resources are committed to this. That is what would be expected from a government that is trying to make sure that we move forward as a community together. We will continue that conversation with all the industry and other stakeholders.