

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE BILL 2021

Statement

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [6.45 pm]: I will keep it brief because I know everybody is ready to go home.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Hear, hear!

Hon SANDRA CARR: Thank you for those words of support, honourable member. I always appreciate hearing from you across the floor.

Hon Stephen Dawson: That was me!

Hon SANDRA CARR: I apologise. There are so many Stephens in this chamber! Anyway, we digress.

Following on from my honourable colleague's statement about one fabulous Ms Taylor, I thought I would speak about another. I saw on social media today that Ms Taylor Swift has announced a world tour and Perth is included on that schedule. It got me thinking about some of the popular culture that we experience. Having seen that online, it made me start thinking about the motion that we heard today that was couched in words such as "extraordinary level of concern". I was looking at the motion and thought that in terms of popular culture, even Taylor Swift might have something to say. The song that sprung to mind for me was one that is quite popular at the moment. We hear it on the radio and I am sure the tune will pop in members' heads when I say it, but it is *You need to calm down*.

When some members speak, they get particularly riled up. But I looked at the motion and I thought I will put it under the microscope of pop culture. The three pillars are: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? I felt that as a teacher it did not pass on any of those levels either. I gave it a D.

I thought: is it true? It was disingenuous at best. Is it necessary? I thought it was profoundly disrespectful to the intention of the legislation, and that was in terms of respecting and preserving our incredibly precious Aboriginal cultural heritage, something that we have not done very well historically, despite legislation that has existed to do that for 50 years. I thought no, it was not necessary. It was disrespectful. Is it kind? No, it was divisive. It was intended to be divisive. I can make that claim because Taylor Swift gave me licence to do that in her song that is about attacking people using social media. One of the lines is "You say it in a tweet and it's a cop-out." I am going to read members a tweet from Hon Neil Thomson, referring to the legislation. It says —

‘Simpler and fairer’what a sick joke.

I will do the body language —

Mums and Dads should check the regs for the next beach trip. A Tier 2 permit might be needed when your child builds a sandcastle on the beach (assuming it involves more than 20kg of sand of course) —

I assume it has been a while since the honourable member built a sandcastle —

Your 2 year old should be ok provided they do a due diligence assessment ... I mean you don't want another Juukan Gorge do you? Maybe the kids should sign up for the board of Rio!

The motion says "extraordinary level of concern". If that is not someone trying to beat up extraordinary concern, I do not know what is. I am just going to use the words of the Taylor Swift song —

But you say it in a Tweet, that's a cop-out. And I'm just like, "Hey, are you okay?"

I feel like those lines are right. One of the other tweets I saw from the honourable member was one saying —

Labor's immature and disgusting weaponisation of everything is getting really boring. People have had enough of this divisive style politicking. You can't hide incompetence any more!

I started to feel confused about whether he was writing in his diary or whether he was writing a tweet. I say again in the lines of Taylor Swift, "Hey, are you okay?" Then he seems to conflate the legislation with what should not be a political issue—the Voice to Parliament. In a tweet he writes —

Labor elites must be very worried about this—especially noting that 44% of Labor voters are either a 'no' or 'undecided'. This is an internal Labor crisis of Labor's own making.

Hon Neil Thomson says he wants to be a voice for Indigenous Australians, but we say that they have their own voice and that is what the referendum is designed to do. Conflating the Australian Cultural Heritage Act and the Voice is disingenuous, disrespectful, completely unnecessary and unkind. It is dog whistling to the broader community, as has been suggested. It is something that is happening on the internet.

I note the federal member for Durack's involvement as she continues her three-year holiday around the Durack electorate. She also has been posting the petition to her Facebook page and encouraging people to sign it, tagging Hon Neil Thomson. On her Facebook page, she talks about the Australian Cultural Heritage Act, saying —

The ACHA places substantial compliance obligations on farmers who may then face a complicated and potentially costly process before carrying out basic tasks like fencing or deep ripping.

She talks more about the act and its impact on farmers. We have heard and seen the department and ministers talking about the process. We have seen information distributed that says it is not that complex. I also note that the member for Durack, who is working side by side with Hon Neil Thomson, was a lawyer before she entered Parliament. She has been an MP for many years, so I think it is fairly safe to assume that she knows and can read legislation and that she knows what a misrepresentation is.

In one of her other Facebook posts, she talks about one of the informational workshops that was held in Geraldton. It has a photo and says —

The Geraldton workshop for State Labor’s controversial ACHA is now on. There is a general feeling of unrest in the room and the community is making their voices heard ... there is standing room only ...

From reading that, I think that people would assume that she was in the room, but—much like during environmental catastrophes such as the mass fish kill in Menindee in the far west of New South Wales and the Tasmanian bushfires that burned World Heritage areas when she was the federal Minister for the Environment—she fails to mention that she was missing and not there. She was not at the meeting although she represents on the page that she was.

I feel that the extraordinary level of concern has been agitated and stirred up. It is a misrepresentation of the situation to say that this is, as the honourable member put it, a “terrible law”. I believe that he needs to calm down. He needs to support the groups he is standing up to support—or claims to be supporting—and take a helpful rather than hurtful approach. He needs to calm down.