

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT — LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PETITION

714. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer the Premier to page 8 of today's *The West Australian*, where he is quoted as saying that a petition numbering in excess of 29 000 signatures requesting a delay to the implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act was just an e-petition and not a proper petition.

- (1) Has the Premier familiarised himself with the standing orders, which make no distinction between the validity of an e-petition and a paper one?
- (2) Should we take his comments to indicate that the government has broken from the rest of us here in Parliament and now believes in a two-tier petition system, with some signatures worth more, or less, than others?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

That is hilarious, but completely out of context.

- (1)–(2) The premise of the question is incorrect, and the member is quoting the Premier's comments out of context. The Premier's full quote was —

... I want to apologise because I did not realise that the members opposite were talking about an e-petition. I thought it was a proper petition.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Can members just wait? I quote —

I thought it was a proper petition. It is ... an e-petition, is it? All right. That is fair enough. It is good to clarify that. I thought it was a petition in the traditional means.

As the member would be aware, the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly have different standing orders. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier is well aware of its standing orders, which do not permit the use of e-petitions.