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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice

Tuesday, 9 June 2020

C554. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Environment representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

I refer to the recent destruction of the The Juukan Gorge caves, and note the Minister "learned [of the event] a few days after [it] occurred" (RN Breakfast with Fran Kelly, ABC, 1st June 2020, 01:01-01:20) and I ask:

1. What time on 19 May 2020, and by what methods, was The Department of Planning, Lands & Heritage (DPLH) contacted by the PKKP or their representatives?
2. Who – their position within DPLH - was in attendance for the communications referred to at (1)?
3. What was the communication, referred to at (1), about and did the Department record the meeting?
4. What action did the attendees to the meeting referred to at (1), take in response to the communications with PKKP?
5. Is it standard practice for DPLH to act autonomously from the Minister by not informing them of details relating to communications?

Answer

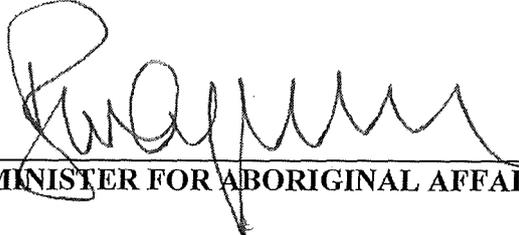
1. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage representatives met with advisers to the Puutu Kuntj Kurrama and Pinikura Native Title Group (PKKP) via Teams at 2.00 pm on 19 May 2020. No PKKP Traditional Owners were present at the meeting. The meeting was on an unrelated matter. Shortly before the meeting, Department staff were informed by the advisers that they wished to also discuss a matter relating to the Brockman mine.

2. The Director, Aboriginal Heritage Operations and Team Leader, Aboriginal Heritage Operations participated in the meeting.

3. At the end of the meeting on 19 May 2020, the advisers to PKKP sought confirmation of their understanding of the section 18 Consent issued for the Brockman mine in 2013, and sought confirmation that such consents cannot be revoked. Department officers confirmed this was the case. Some notes of the meeting were recorded.

4. The Department is aware that Rio Tinto has an established agreement with the PKKP. Subsequent to the meeting, the Department contacted Rio Tinto to ensure they were aware of the meeting with PKKP advisers.

5. The Department regularly meets with traditional owner representatives and proponents in undertaking its responsibilities in relation to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and Aboriginal heritage more broadly.


MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

