

CONNECT SOUTH WEST - OWNERSHIP

1027. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for South West:

- (1) Can the minister advise Parliament of the intent behind an agreement that would return Connect South West to Bunbury Chamber of Commerce and Industries ownership for the sum of \$1?
- (2) Should the ownership of Connect South West be returned to the chamber of commerce for the sum of \$1, can the minister advise Parliament what, if any, return is likely on the significant state government investment?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Nigel Hallett for some notice of the question.

- (1) The south west portal was transferred to Connect South West from the Bunbury Chamber of Commerce and Industries for \$1 in 2003. The intent of Connect South West in forming its constitution was to allow the return of the portal to the chamber in recognition of a possible scenario that the portal may not support its administration in the long term. The chamber was willing to accept an option to administer it on behalf of the business community should it be necessary.
- (2) The return to the state from the entire Connect South West project is as follows: 245 community websites have been established; 1 191 seniors have received training in basic computing; 200 members of the community have received training; a seniors' computer club has been developed; 95 per cent of south west businesses are registered on the portal without charge; 1 651 businesses have received information technology advice and support; \$50 000 was provided to assist businesses with advanced IT training; business has been exposed to an average of 25 000 visitors to the portal per month; the community has had access to advanced search facilities relating to government and business webpages; the project has triggered commonwealth funding to support the expansion of wireless and ADSL broadband into 25 south west communities; the project has triggered interest in advanced private sector computing facilities in Bunbury; and the portal has developed 19 mytown sites that promote business and IT access at the local town level.