

ANSETT AUSTRALIA, TRAINEES

393. Mr O'GORMAN to the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection:

Will the minister inform the House of what moves he is taking to ensure that trainees caught by Ansett Australia's sudden demise complete their traineeships?

Mr KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

I know the member is very concerned about a range of issues relating to the impact of the closure of Ansett Australia, especially those affecting the call centre in his electorate and the impact it is having on many of his constituents.

The suspension of Ansett Australia by the liquidator on 14 September has led to a number of repercussions that are wreaking havoc in many areas. I will comment on traineeships. My inquiries have established that 170 trainees are affected; 166 at the Ansett call centre and four others at Ansett Air Freight, Ansett Airlines and Traveland Pty Ltd. The Department of Training has a responsibility to try to ensure the completion of the traineeships. The Ansett call centre came into operation in October 2000. It received help from the then State Government under its call centre industry incentive scheme. An amount of \$300 000 was allocated for training. Ansett contracted out the training services to an eastern states company, Ready Workforce. Ready Workforce undertook the training. To date, there have been no complaints. The company did not receive payment from Ansett for the training it undertook. As a result, Ready Workforce ceased providing training to the trainees at the call centre. Many of the trainees have been left well short of what is needed to complete their traineeships. There is little possibility of the continuation of the traineeships with Ansett. The Department of Training has suspended the training agreement with Ansett for a period of two months. That, legally, gives the opportunity for the trainees to continue their traineeships with another employer. With respect to Ready Workforce, the Department of Training has reduced the time for trainees to be assessed as competent. Even though the traineeships have not finished, assessment of competence means that the trainees can be accredited with reaching the required standards. The trainees have been advised that Joblink projects will be available to them. The Department of Training will write to all trainees to inform them of their options. Officers from the Department of Training visited the Ansett call centre on Monday to speak to administrators and staff to advise them as to what help is available through Joblink and other programs provided by the Department of Training.