

SYNERGY — COAL IMPORTS

1240. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to Synergy's unprecedented action to bring 103 000 tonnes of coal from Newcastle to Collie last summer.

- (1) Was the total cost of bringing in the Newcastle coal \$965 a tonne?
- (2) If the minister refuses to answer (1), why is he denying it?
- (3) Was the total cost associated with the purchase, transport and preparation of the 103 000 tonnes of coal that was brought in therefore approximately \$99 395 000?
- (4) Unless the government is planning to repeat the exercise and bring more coal from interstate to our struggling Western Australian coal mining hub of Collie, what possible other reason could explain the disgraceful use of commercial confidentiality to hide the government's embarrassment?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Energy.

- (1)–(4) As has previously been explained to Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Synergy operates in a regulated, competitive market with other market competitors. To ensure that Synergy can appropriately spend taxpayer funds in negotiated contracts with competitive pricing and mitigate against the risk of suppliers taking advantage of Synergy as a government trading enterprise if its contract terms were made public, the details of Synergy's contractual arrangements with coal suppliers, including costs associated with delivery, are commercial-in-confidence, as they would be for Synergy's competitors. To do otherwise would unduly disadvantage Synergy.