

SYNERGY AND SYNERGY REGIONAL, MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS AND MINISTERIAL STAFF

1073. Hon Barry House to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for State Development

Will the Minister please provide the following information -

- (1) Details of all meetings held between the Minister and representatives of Synergy, Synergy Regional and the administrators of Synergy Regional, from January 1 2003, including -
  - (a) the date of the meeting;
  - (b) the location of the meeting;
  - (c) the names of those present;
  - (d) who instigated the meeting;
  - (e) the reason for the meeting;
  - (f) whether the meeting included a meal or refreshments; and
  - (g) who paid for the meal of refreshments (if applicable)?
- (2) Details of all meetings held between members of the Minister's staff and representatives of Synergy, Synergy Regional and the administrators of Synergy Regional, from January 1 2003, including -
  - (a) the date of the meeting;
  - (b) the location of the meeting;
  - (c) the names of those present;
  - (d) who instigated the meeting;
  - (e) the reason for the meeting;
  - (f) whether the meeting included a meal or refreshments; and
  - (g) who paid for the meal of refreshments (if applicable)?
- (3) The total financial contribution of the State Government (including contributions through the South West Development Commission) to Synergy, or Synergy Regional for the establishment and operation of call centres in -
  - (a) Collie;
  - (b) Albany; and
  - (c) Bunbury?
- (4) A breakdown of all assistance provided to Synergy or Synergy Regional by the State Government, including but not limited to -
  - (a) the nature and value of each assistance measure;
  - (b) the reason for each assistance measure;
  - (c) the date of any financial transactions; and
  - (d) the value of any financial transactions?
- (5) What provisions were put in place to protect the State's investment in the Synergy call centres?
- (6) Does the financial assistance agreement provide the State with any means of recouping the assistance measures provided to Synergy or Synergy Regional?
- (7) If yes to (6), what is the nature and value of any assets that the State may claim?
- (8) If not, why not?
- (9) What action is the Government taking to recoup the State's investment in the Synergy call centres?
- (10) What is the total number of people who have lost employment at each of the Synergy call centres due to the Sydney collapse?
- (11) When was the Government first aware that Synergy was in financial trouble?
- (12) What action was taken as a result?
- (13) When did the Minister first become aware that Synergy was in financial trouble?

(14) What action did the Minister take?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

(1) & (2)(a, b, c, d, e, f, g)

Information can only be provided from the date that the Minister was officially sworn in as Minister for State Development, which is from Thursday 11 March 2005.

- (2) The Minister or members of the Minister's staff have not met with representatives of Synergy, Synergy Regional or the administrators of Synergy Regional.
- (3) (a) \$400,000  
(b) \$400,000  
(c) Nil
- (4) (a) Total financial assistance provided to Synergy Regional Pty Ltd was \$800,000 in the form of a convertible interest free loan. The loans were provided in two payments of \$400,000.  
(b) To assist Synergy Regional Pty Ltd to establish call centres in Collie and Albany.  
(c) The first payment of \$400,000 was provided to Synergy Regional Pty Ltd on 23 January 2004. The second payment was provided to Synergy Regional Pty Ltd on 21 April 2004.  
(d) Refer to question 4. (c) above.
- (5) A fixed charge over assets in favour of the Minister for State Development was established prior to each loan payment being made.
- (6) Yes.
- (7) The assets subject to the State's Fixed Charge Agreement are computers, servers, switches, telephony equipment, furniture and office fixtures and the total listed value of these assets is \$1,007,301.
- (8) Not applicable.
- (9) The Government has accepted an offer from the Receiver to realise the assets of Synergy Regional Pty Ltd that are subject to the State's Fixed Charge and is proceeding with the appointment of a liquidator to undertake an investigation and to provide a report of the affairs of Synergy Regional Pty Ltd.
- (10) The Minister is aware of the loss of up to 38 jobs in Collie and the loss of up to 29 jobs in Albany. Job losses at Synergy Regional Pty Ltd's Sydney and Perth call centres are not known as these centres were outside of the Government's Agreement with Synergy Regional Pty Ltd.
- (11) 21 March 2005
- (12) The Department of Industry and Resources attempted to contact a Director of Synergy Regional Pty Ltd and discussions were entered into with the Receiver.
- (13) On 24 March 2005 information was received in the Minister's office from the Department of Industry & Resources regarding Synergy.
- (14) The Minister asked for further advice from the Department of Industry & Resources.