

**Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Questions on Notice – Inquiry into Commonwealth Procurement**

Response by Mr David Milo

With reference to a personal explanation that the Member for Fadden, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, delivered in the House of Representatives on 30 March 2023, where he claimed that:

- a) The allegation Unisys sought his assistance to arrange a meeting with the National Security Committee of Cabinet was “absurd”; and*
- b) The idea a private company could present to the National Security Committee of Cabinet was “ridiculous”; and*

AND, with reference to an email that Unisys Executive Tony Windever sent to Mr Milo on 25 September 2017, in which Mr Windever wrote:

"I sent Stuart an email yesterday to follow up our meeting and request contact details for the appropriate person to arrange a presentation to the committee,"

"I also asked for his thoughts on delivering a similar presentation to the National Security Committee. Stuart hasn't responded as yet."

(David Crowe and Nick McKenzie, 'Lib MP-linked contracts face probe', The Age, 31 March 2023 refers).

1. Does Mr Milo agree with the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, that the allegation Unisys sought the Member for Fadden's assistance to arrange a meeting with the National Security Committee of Cabinet is “absurd”?

I am aware that Mr Windever asked Mr Robert whether it would be valuable to deliver a presentation to the National Security Committee. I assume that nothing came of it and I have no further knowledge of the matter.

2. Does Mr Milo agree that the idea a private company could present to the National Security Committee of Cabinet is “ridiculous”?

I refer to my answer to Question 1 above. I have no knowledge of who presents to the National Security Committee.

With reference to a personal explanation that the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, delivered in the House of Representatives on 1 December 2022, in which he claimed he had “zero involvement” with any procurements.

AND with reference to reports by David Crowe and Nick McKenzie published in The Age/Sydney Morning Herald, that the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, had involvement in:

- a) Centrelink's procurement of Entitlement Calculation Engine (ECE) technology from Infosys.*
- b) A failed bid by Unisys to supply “linesight” border security software to immigration, law enforcement and national security agencies pursuant to a proposed procurement by the Australian Government.*
- c) A failed bid by Oracle to supply technology to operate the National Criminal Intelligence System pursuant to a procurement by the Australian Government.*

- d) *A proposed procurement by the Singaporean Government of medical support services from Aspen Medical, in respect of Singaporean military personnel training in Central and North Queensland under the auspices of the Australia Singapore Military Training Initiative.*
 - e) *A proposed procurement by Gold Coast City Council of goods/services from Formosa Plastics Group, in respect of a planned city-wide lighting replacement project.*
 - f) *A failed bid by Navy Health to supply garrison health services to the Commonwealth pursuant to a procurement by the Australian Government.*
1. *How can Mr Milo reconcile the claim that the Member for Fadden had “zero involvement” in any procurements with the Hon. Stuart Robert’s advice and assistance to Synergy 360 in its advice, activities and engagement with clients?*

With respect to a), as far as I am aware, Mr Robert had no involvement in the procurement of ECE technology by the Government. I understand that general discussions did occur between the Minister and the heads of all or certainly most of the major Australian IT service providers on separate occasions during this period.

With respect to b), I am not aware of the existence of either this proposed procurement or failed bid but I am aware that the Minister helped facilitate a presentation by Unisys to the Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity.

With respect to c), I am unaware of a failed bid by Oracle to supply technology to operate the National Criminal Intelligence System pursuant to a procurement by the Australian Government.

With respect to d), I was involved in discussions with the Singaporean Government regarding this issue. I do not recall whether Mr Robert was involved in that matter.

With respect to e), Mr Robert introduced me to technology offered by Formosa and was involved in raising the issue with the Gold Coast City Council. I also asked Mr Robert to cast his eye over a draft costed proposal I had drafted for Synergy360 to work up an unsolicited (market led) proposal for Formosa, and see if there were any issues.

With respect to f), Mr Robert introduced me to Mr Wilson of Navy Health who I subsequently introduced to Glen Keys of Aspen Medical. I have no knowledge regarding any arrangements or agreements reached between Navy Health and Aspen Medical if there were any.

Mr Robert did not assist Synergy360 or any of its clients to successfully procure Government services as far as I am aware. I otherwise refer to my answers to (a) to (f) above.

2. *Is Mr Milo aware that, when asked by journalists if he helped Synergy 360 and its clients bid for contracts with the Australian Government, the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, replied “Of course not. What a load of rubbish”? [David Crowe and Nick McKenzie, ‘Liberal MP gave secret advice to lobbyist’, The Age, 24 November 2022 refers]*

I am aware of and have read that article.

3. *Is Mr Milo aware that, when asked by journalists if he had given help to companies such as Unisys and Infosys, the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, replied “Of course not. Why would I care about them”? [David Crowe, ‘Backbench corridor to power’, Sydney Morning Herald, 25 November 2022 refers]*

I am aware of and have read that article.

4. *Does Mr Milo deny that the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, engaged with Synergy 360 and Unisys as part of their bid for a contract with the Defence Signals Directorate, having regard to a report by David Crowe and Nick McKenzie entitled ‘Liberal MP gave secret advice to lobbyist’ published in The Age on 24 November 2022, which reveals that:*
 - a. *In October 2017, Mr Milo (cc Mr Margerison) sent an email to the Member for Fadden, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, asking “Stuart” for his advice about how Unisys could best position itself to win a contract from the Defence Signals Directorate; and*
 - b. *In response, the Member for Fadden, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, wrote back to Mr Milo and Mr Margerison to provide the following advice about Synergy 360’s lobbying strategy:*

“I don’t see anywhere here the senior engagement strategy where the CEO or you has gone and seen the DG DSD [Director General Defence Signals Directorate] or the relevant Minister to ask them what they want. An Audit report is neither here or there, it’s Government strategy that matters. Has Unisys gone to the Department to seek clarity or further more offer advice on the best way to manage this transition”?

I am not aware of Unisys undertaking any work for, or bidding for a contract with, the Defence Signals Directorate. I cannot recall the details of the matter but I do recall that in October 2017, Mr Robert recommended that Unisys approach the relevant government department to seek clarity or to obtain advice regarding an issue but I cannot recall what the issue was other than a recollection that it involved managing a transition, not seeking a contract or procurement.

5. *If the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, didn’t help Unisys, why did Unisys ask Mr Milo to arrange a “meet with Stuart Robert” to “thank him for his support” (David Crowe and Nick McKenzie, ‘Liberal MP gave secret advice to lobbyist’, The Age, 24 November 2022 refers)?*

I understand Unisys officials, including the Global CEO, met with a number of government officials (including Ministers) in what I understood was a normal process of discussing the defence and national security environment in which they operated. I also understand that Mr Robert assisted in making those arrangements.

6. *Does Mr Milo deny that the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, advised and assisted Synergy 360 and Infosys during the preparation of their bid for the Centrelink ECE contract, having regard to a report by David Crowe and Nick McKenzie entitled ‘Leaked files reveal meetings’ published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 1 December 2022, which reveals:*

- a. *In June, November and December 2019, Infosys paid Synergy 360 to attend meetings with the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, in his then capacity as Minister for Government Services; and*
- b. *A Synergy 360 memo of December 2019 reveals that Mr Milo provided Infosys “feedback from the Minister [Stuart Robert]” in relation to the supply of Entitlement Calculation Engine (ECE) technology to Centrelink, as well as the possibility the Australian Government could extend the ECE technology across multiple departments?*

With respect to a), Synergy360 is not paid to attend meetings, any meetings that are attended by Synergy360 employees are incidental to advisory work being undertaken on behalf of clients.

With respect to b), this memo, relating to a meeting I had with Mr Robert, conveyed concerns Mr Robert had with the roll out of the ECE program. It occurred post procurement and contract execution.

7. *Does Mr Milo deny that the Member for Fadden, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, helped Synergy 360 and its clients as part of their pitch for Australian Government contracts, having regard to a report by David Crowe and Nick McKenzie entitled ‘Questions raised over Lib MP’s role in Committee’, published in The Age on 28 March 2023, which reveals that:*
 - a. *Unisys paid Synergy 360 to have the Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, arrange for Unisys to appear before the Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI Committee).*
 - b. *The Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, used his position as a member of the ACLEI Committee to arrange for Unisys to be invited to appear at a private hearing of the ACLEI Committee.*
 - c. *Unisys appeared before the ACLEI Committee at a private hearing on 30 November 2017. Unisys pitched its “linesight” border security software to the ACLEI Committee, with the objective of obtaining the Committee’s endorsement for the software, which Unisys planned to leverage to drive sales of “linesight” across government.*
 - d. *The Member for Fadden, Hon Stuart Robert MP, met with Unisys and Synergy 360 in the lead up to that private hearing, first at Mr John Margerison’s home on the Gold Coast, and later in Canberra, to help Unisys prepare for their appearance before the ACLEI Committee.*

I suggested to Unisys that they approach Mr Robert to discuss the linesight technology. I understood Mr Robert was a member of the ACLEI Committee and that he and other Committee members may be interested in the linesight technology that had been jointly developed by Unisys, the CSIRO and Data 61. I am aware that Unisys did subsequently present to the Committee.