

SCHOOLS, KUNUNURRA

758. Hon Tom Stephens to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Minister for Education's promise three years ago that Kununurra upper secondary education would be improved, with the possibility of a super school, and ask -

- (1) Why has the Acting Director General of the Education Department advised Kununurra residents that Kununurra will remain a district high school for the foreseeable future?
- (2) Why has five years of implementing and adopting a Local Area Plan, together with submissions for education in Kununurra, been put on the back burner when Kununurra parents hold the view that its implementation would have achieved positive outcomes?
- (3) At what stage is the Local Area Plan and will the Minister table the latest copy of the plan?
- (4) If not, why not?

Hon BARRY HOUSE replied:

- (1) A key outcome of Local Area Education Planning (LAEP) in the Kimberley was support for the retention of the existing school structures at both Wyndham and Kununurra. This was the context of the Acting Director-General's remarks.
- (2) There have been discussions about the future of education in Kununurra and Wyndham for some years. One outcome of these discussions was the 1997 announcement by the Minister for Education that extra staff and funding would be allocated to Kununurra District High School to boost vocational education courses.

The issue of whether to reclassify the school to senior high school status was canvassed with the community during the recent LAEP process. The small number of post compulsory students at Kununurra meant it would be difficult to provide a comprehensive range of educational programs to address their needs in a senior high school setting. Also, although the senior high school concept had some support, it was strongly opposed by some sections of the community. The outcome of LAEP was that the school would remain a district high school. However, the needs of the senior students at Kununurra have again been acknowledged with the allocation of \$300 000 in the 2000/2001 budget for a capital works program at the school. These funds will primarily be used to improve facilities for the post compulsory students.

Construction will start in June and is expected to be completed by December 2001. The scope of the works will be determined in consultation with the Kununurra community. Consultation will commence in January 2001.

- (3) The Local Area Education Planning Process is in its implementation stage. The latest copy of the draft Local Area Education Plan is hereby tabled. [See paper No 518.]