

DIDJI DIDJI ABORIGINAL SCHOOL, CAREY PARK, BUNBURY

22. Hon CHRISTINE SHARP to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the minister aware of the urgent needs of the Didji Didji Aboriginal School at Carey Park in Bunbury for additional space?
- (2) What is the minister's solution to providing enough space for this school to fully function?
- (3) If the minister has not finalised a strategy to resolve the school's problems, given the urgency of the situation, when will he be making a decision?

Hon BARRY HOUSE replied:

I am advised -

- (1) The Minister for Education visited Djidi Djidi school earlier this year. He is aware of the school's need for additional space and accordingly the following action has been taken: The Education Department is investigating the provision of additional accommodation on the existing site. This would be done with the agreement of the City of Bunbury; and the Education Department is in the process of identifying an alternative site for Djidi Djidi that will provide the space required.
- (2) The short-term solution is the provision of additional transportable accommodation on the existing site. The long-term solution is to identify a new site that provides the required space. Both are being worked on.
- (3) The Education Department has established a working group consisting of representatives from the Education Department, City of Bunbury and Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School Board and the Djidi Djidi school principal to identify a suitable site for the Djidi Djidi school. All site options are being considered within the local area. The minister will be briefed when this strategy is finalised, which is expected to be in the near future. A decision on the future of Djidi Djidi school will then be made.

If I might add, I have recently visited Djidi Djidi school and was very impressed with the progress being made. It has very high attendance rates and an excellent participation rate by the community and parents. The school is achieving good educational outcomes. In some ways it has played a lead. It can legitimately claim to be the first government Aboriginal school in the State, not the recently opened school in Midland which is said to be the first Aboriginal school in the State.

Hon Mark Nevill interjected.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It is not only Aboriginal kids who go to Djidi Djidi school; some 85 per cent are Aboriginal kids and 15 per cent are others. I have been in contact with the minister frequently, and as late as yesterday, to try to get the issues raised by Hon Christine Sharp resolved. I am confident that there will be a positive outcome very soon.