However, Dr Birnbrauer also concluded that Department of Education and Training policy in relation to documentation and communication about the use of low stimulus environments was not followed in a number of critical respects and these are detailed in the summary of report findings which I will be tabling with this statement.

Although I am disappointed that the report found some deficiencies with departmental policy, Dr Birnbrauer’s conclusion that the Kenwick School garden enclosure was an appropriate way to manage the student’s “extreme rage” behaviour is important for the school. He concluded that the facility was necessary to protect this young boy, as well as his fellow students and staff. The department has allocated a significant amount of resources - in fact, huge resources - to help maximise the educational outcomes for this student, including two dedicated full-time staff working with just this student at school, exclusive use of a demountable classroom with its own toilet facility and an enclosed area to help manage his behaviour.

It is not acceptable that Dr Birnbrauer could not find documentation to show the boy’s grandmother, his primary carer, had been given full and informed approval for use of such a facility. The Director General of the Department of Education and Training, Mr Paul Albert, has written to the grandmother to apologise that the policy was not followed in those very important areas. Dr Birnbrauer also concluded that an around-the-clock program was needed to cope with the young boy’s challenging behaviour. He said this should be coordinated by an agency external to the school since such programs extend beyond the school. He also concluded that a mechanism for early integrated and committed intervention, known as a “wraparound” approach to children such as this, should be established as a result of the findings of the report. A number of other recommendations, which I do not have the time to detail, are included in the summary that I will table.

As a result of the report’s findings, the department has already initiated a number of policy changes, including the requirement that the use of low-stimulus areas needs the approval of the department’s senior student services staff. Confidentiality and privacy requirements prevent me from tabling the full report. I hereby table a copy of the summary of the report, together with the brief résumé of the report’s author, Dr Jay S. Birnbrauer.

[See papers Nos 2317 and 2318.]

ELLENBROOK, FUTURE HIGH SCHOOL

Grievance

MS J.A. RADISICH (Swan Hills) [9.12 am]: I am pleased to address the House today on an issue that has been of concern in my electorate for quite some time, and of great concern to me personally. I raise my grievance with the Minister for Education and Training about the construction of a future high school in Ellenbrook. This is an issue that I have raised consistently with the Government since my election to Parliament. The Minister for Education and Training knows how important this project is in my electorate to not only Ellenbrook residents, but also the surrounding communities, including Upper Swan, Henley Brook, Vale and so forth.

I am sure the minister will recall our meeting in Ellenbrook in December 2003, at which he met with parents, school representatives, and other local stakeholders. The minister made the commitment to us then that a public high school in Ellenbrook would open in 2008. Today, the state budget for 2004 will be released. I want to put this issue on the record yet again for the benefit of the Minister for Education and Training and Executive Government and request that some of that expectation was raised due to the marketing brochures and so forth that had been put in place. However, the area that a high school would be built sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. Certainly, the Ellenbrook community needs a high school as a matter of priority for a number of reasons. People are leaving Ellenbrook because there is no high school there. They were given the impression when they bought blocks of land in the area that a high school would be built sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. Certainly, some of that expectation was raised due to the marketing brochures and so forth that had been put in place. However, that is no excuse. There are now 10 500 people living in the area and they certainly need a local secondary education facility. At present, the closest high schools to Ellenbrook are around 20 minutes away. The closest public high schools are Governor Stirling Senior High School, Hampton Senior High School, Morley Senior High School and Lockridge Senior High School. That means students from Ellenbrook have to spend a fair amount of time on the bus each day, which also imposes a cost burden on their parents in the order of $500 a year. Students from Ellenbrook deserve the right to get to school in a reasonable amount of time. We need to improve retention rates in the area and we need decent competition with the private sector in secondary education in the area. Around 400 students a day are travelling out of the area to other high schools, and that number will only increase. We need to get a high school in place as soon as possible so that parents can keep their kids together and have them educated at the same secondary institution.

I have been in constant contact with members of the Ellenbrook community about this important issue, who have said that they want quality teaching outcomes, a diverse and a good range of programs for their children and, especially, the local provision of education. The kinds of statistics that I have researched in Ellenbrook indicate that around 85 per cent of families who live in Ellenbrook would consider sending their children to a public secondary institution and around 12 per cent indicated that they would prefer private schooling. However, I am not the only one who has conducted research into this very important local matter. The City of Swan has undertaken place-planning investigations for Ellenbrook, The Vines and the Vale development. The investigation revealed that the matter of
highest priority for the community was to have a doctor in the area. I am pleased to say that Dr Samuel Bada will be starting up a practice in Ellenbrook on 1 June this year.

However, the provision of a high school and/or TAFE facility ranks second in the list of issues Ellenbrook residents would most like to see resolved. This research was undertaken by Asset Research and the outcomes were published in April 2004. It identified a need for public education alternatives in the area given the cost of private education, that a broad range of subjects need to be offered, that transport costs for students need to be minimised and that young people need to have after-school activities in which to participate in their local area.

I note the role that Ellenbrook Management Pty Ltd has played in lobbying on behalf of this important project and for its interest in the matter, particularly the work done by the Managing Director, Danny Murphy; the General Manager, Russel Perry; and the Chairman of the Board, Mr Maurice Owen. Ellenbrook is a joint venture between the Department of Housing and Works and Morella Pty Ltd. As at 16 March 2004, 3 750 lots had been sold, 2,954 homes had been built and the population in the area was around 10,500, with a high concentration of families with children and teenagers.

The current enrolment statistics from years 3 to 7 at the three public-feeder primary schools range between 141 and 173. Of course, as the developments are progressing, more and more students enrol on a daily basis, and that number is growing. If this project were to be brought forward from 2008, as currently proposed, to at least 2007, a year 5 student today would be in year 8 when the school is opened. There is a great need for a new educational concept in the area. The City of Swan and other agencies are conducting lots of active community planning. A new library is being built, and a new performing arts venue, playing fields and an exhibition space are all planned. All these community facilities can be integrated with a secondary facility if talks commence between the Department of Education and Training, Ellenbrook Management, the City of Swan and others to create the partnerships to build the best possible community we can have. Some parents say they would not send their kids to a public high school; I say we should prove their concerns wrong.

I acknowledge some of the people who have been involved in assisting me to secure a public high school for the area. Their commitment to this long-term project has been unwavering and they include Karen Lockyer, formerly at Coolamon Primary School; Neil MacNeil and Ray Boyd from Ellenbrook Primary School; Chris Reed from Upper Swan Primary School; and our newest local principal, Chris Leed from Arbor Grove Primary School. I also thank a number of parents who have really pushed this matter along, including Angela Lewis, Anita Morris, Barbara Laughton, Barbara Williams, Councillor Todd Jones, Darlene Shepherd, David and Marie Job, Debbie Pettigrove, Elaine Knott, Elizabeth Cross, Gayle Van Raalte, Greg and Lee-Anne Mofflin, Larisa Flatters, Helen Menzies, Jacky Peach, Jill Pinfold, Joanne Iveson, Jodie and David Koch, Jodie Wilburn, Jude Holmes, Julie Cockman, Karen Clark, Kathy Purves, Kerry Bubnich, Lee Bassett, Liz Mead, Madlyn Ritchie, Mark and Karyn Woodford, Mel Green, Michelle Deamor, Michelle McCabe, Morati Asgan, Poppy Legg, Richard Walters, Rowena Hunt, Steve Green and Tammy Witt.

I hope that the minister can understand our real and genuine need in Ellenbrook for a high school and that he can accommodate us at the nearest possible opportunity.

**MR A.J. CARPENTER (Willagee - Minister for Education and Training) [9.20 am]:** Which names did the member for Swan Hills leave out?

Ms J.A. Radisch: I missed out a couple.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Firstly, I thank the member very much for her very good and detailed grievance. She had an opportunity to thank a large number of people in Ellenbrook but she may have run out of time before thanking Richard Walters, Rowena Hunt, Sam Dobson, Tammy Witt, Tanya Peschke and Tina Anderson.

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Please, member for Kalgoorlie; I want to respond to this grievance. Firstly, I thank the member very much for her grievance and for the way she has conducted her advocacy on this issue. I have been to the area and examined the Arbor Grove Primary School facilities that were being developed.

Ms J.A. Radisch: It opened on the first Tuesday before the last break.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: It is a beautiful new primary school. I met the parents of children who attend the local school and have met various other people many of whom were probably mentioned by name in the member’s grievance.

It is good fun being an education minister. Pressure points arise from all over the State and, with the help of the department, we must prioritise spending and try to make adjustments when populations increase in one area versus another and try to satisfy a very extensive demand. I do my best.

I am sure other ministers face the same pressures. No matter which end of the political spectrum they come from I am sure all education ministers try their best to provide the best educational resources for people all over the State. Children are children and we need to do our best for every child in Western Australia. For example, last week I was in Margaret River, which is not traditionally a Labor area, where I attended the opening of the magnificent new facility that combines school, TAFE and university education. Significant pressures need to be addressed in Busselton. I am
very keen to support a very big project on the board in Mt Barker, and the pressure in Esperance is strong - some work needs to be done there. Pressure comes from all over the State, not to mention the northern and southern suburbs. Of course, the previous Government did some good work in the western suburbs, and good on it!

Mr J.H.D. Day: And elsewhere, including Midvale etc.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: Come on! It did good work elsewhere.

This is a genuine case. Independently, the Department of Education and Training recognised in its forward planning that, at some stage, a new high school would be needed in Ellenbrook. Since that initial realisation, the population in Ellenbrook has increased. I do not know whether the member for Swan Hills referred to the figures, but Ellenbrook Primary School has 662 students, the new Arbor Grove school already has 288 students and Upper Swan Primary School has 388 students. There are 1 330 children in Ellenbrook who attend primary school. Many children are taking buses or private transport to high schools because of the absence of a high school at Ellenbrook. I concede all the points the member has made: a school is necessary; the only issue is timing. I concede the viability of providing an excellent government school. Not everybody can or wants to enrol their children in non-government schools, nor should they. We must provide the best possible education in the government school system. I have had many discussions with the education department bureaucrats over this issue.

This year the education budget is a very good capital works budget. It is one of the biggest allocations in the budget. Capital works budgets in education are what could be called “lumpy” depending on what projects are happening at any one time. The allocation for capital works in one year might be huge but the allocation next year might not be as big, because some projects have been finished and others have not started. This year it is a very good capital works budget. It takes about 30 months to develop a high school from the time we agree to construct it to the time the doors are opened. Planning, site evaluation, construction, tendering etc must be done. If we were able to sign off on Ellenbrook now, the earliest possible date on which it could open would be 2007, which is what the member is seeking. If we had fast-tracked the original Department of Education and Training proposal, it would have been completed by about 2008. In light of the contact I have had with the member, the information she has provided me, the compelling nature of the demographic data and the very good capital works budget this year, I was in a position to ask what was the earliest possible time this project could proceed without compromising one other project in Western Australia. The answer was that, given this year’s budget, I can stand in Parliament and say that the work in Ellenbrook can start this year - in the forthcoming financial year. Ellenbrook High School will be open for business - if we can get the bricks. That is a problem.

Mr M.J. Birney: We will give you some of ours.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I am being realistic. There are issues with building supplies in Western Australia now and bricks must be trucked in from Queensland and Victoria. A shipping company is making a fortune bringing in bricks from Queensland. In light of the information the member has brought to my attention, good budgeting - we have the best Treasurer Western Australia has had for at least 20 years -

Several members interjected.

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: No-one in his right mind could dispute that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: The member can go back to her constituency and say that the Minister for Education has stood up in the Parliament and said that work on Ellenbrook High School will begin in the forthcoming financial year and the target for its opening is 2007.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND WORKS, HOUSING STOCKS, MAINTENANCE

Grievance

MR R.N. SWEETMAN (Ningaloo) [9.25 am]: If, in a seven-minute grievance, the member for Swan Hills can get confirmation that a high school will be built, I am sure that my request of the minister, which is a lot more modest, is achievable in the short term, if not immediately.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: My grievance is about public housing stocks. I assume I should address it to the member for Cockburn as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Housing and Works.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: No; it should be addressed to me.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: Oh, goody! I am sorry it is not the member for Cockburn. However, I am sure he will listen intently to what I have to say because he probably has similar problems in his area.

The minister may recall that previously in this Parliament I referred primarily to maintenance of public housing stocks, now under the control of the Department of Housing and Works. When I was researching this issue I wanted to be