



**Ceduna Area School issues.
24 March 2005**

The angry response from Labor state members to the publicising of issues surrounding Ceduna Area School indicates guilt, according to the Member for Flinders Liz Penfold.

“The issues of bullying and inappropriate behaviour have not been addressed in a way that brings about change, personal disparagement is directed at anyone who mentions the problems, while the Minister appears always to have something else to do rather than act on the issues,” she said.

Mrs Penfold said that the very successful Bush Breakaway program initiated by what was the Crime Prevention Unit, local Police and run by the District Council of Ceduna is a proven role modelling program in bringing about behavioural change while instilling self confidence.

“I understand that mentors are available but funding is needed and has been applied for through the Federal Government. The program works on referrals from a number of agencies in the community and mentors are then allocated.

Mrs Penfold said the new Ceduna Area School principal is already trying to get on top of the current bullying and harassment problems.

“A project called the Emu Farm was used for ‘time out’ for some cases both aboriginal and white however this is not operating at the moment because of the need for a Full Time Equivalent(FTE) teacher to work with the children. A FTE teacher needs to be allocated immediately to run the Emu Farm off the school campus. The on campus Emu Farm room is not an adequate alternative.”

“I understand that the principal has said rigid re-entry conditions need to be in place for students to return to the school. This is the way in which the system worked previously and it worked well,” Mrs Penfold said.

“I believe that there is funding available from Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS) for two family support officers and if an FTE teacher was allocated the Emu Farm school annex could be up and running.”

Mrs Penfold said these facts demonstrate the need for an approach that went across all the government departments involved and would like to see these agencies working together to solve the problem.

Mrs Penfold said the reports she had received indicated that the Education Department, had not acted outside the school environment in addressing the issues.

“The Education Department has not been in contact with other agencies despite assurances to me from Minister Lomax-Smith when I talked with her about the matters.

“This may be departmental policy in which case it is wrong, or it may be a directive from the Minister in which case, again, it is wrong.

“Community problems are not solved by an isolationist approach,” she said.

Mrs Penfold said the Ceduna Youth Centre established by the former Liberal State Government has reduced the youth crime rate in Ceduna by around 80%. The Youth Centre has been very successful and is hosting up to 60 kids a night.

There is a real need for an assurance from the government that funding will continue to keep this facility up and running” Mrs Penfold said.