



Long wait over for parents

IAN CUTLER

PARENTS of children at the Meekatharra School of the Air have welcomed this week's announcement of a new facility to be built at Bluff Point by 2011.

President of the school's Parents and Citizen's Association, Carolyn Halleen, said it had been a long time coming since the school's Meekatharra headquarters burnt down in 2006.

"We have been concerned about the temporary structure at Beachlands Primary School, which made us question what the future held," she said.

"As the oldest School of the Air with a fine tradition, and it was great to

hear we can go forward with the new site."

Mrs Halleen, who lives on Boolardy Station in the Murchison, said the new facility would have more room for visiting students.

"We'll have a conference room, a meeting room and a classroom, while at the moment there's only the one classroom with a limited space for lessons with children at different levels of learning or those with special needs," she said.

Mrs Halleen said the P and C would continue to seek funding sources to give the best possible services for the students and their teachers.

Among these would be

consideration of accommodation next to the new facility for families when they came in from remote regions.

In other reaction to the announcement, Agriculture Region MLC Brian Ellis said he was "over the moon" the new school would be built.

"As a third generation farmer and a former boarding school student I know how much this school means to parents and children living in remote communities," he said.

"One of the first things I did when the Barnett Government was elected was to contact Education Minister Elizabeth Constable on their behalf.

"Within a few weeks the minister made a special fly-in visit to Geraldton to discuss the issue when she was enroute from Carnarvon.

"At that time Nagle College was the suggested site, but it is my view the new \$3.7 million purpose-built facility has been well worth the wait".

Former Geraldton MLA Shane Hill said the announcement was great for the community and he congratulated the Premier and Education Minister on the decision.

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