Options for a new secondary education facility in Palmerston are currently being considered as part of the review of secondary education in the Territory, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Syd Stirling, said today.

Mr Stirling said Government would allocate $10 million to the project in next week’s Budget. However, the Government was still working on developing the best option for the Palmerston community.

"The Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) is currently exploring options on the best way to provide senior secondary education for what is a growing and vibrant community," Mr Stirling said.

"This is being done in conjunction with the ongoing review of secondary education in the Territory.

"Contrary to comments made by the Opposition education spokesperson and the Independent Member for Nelson, no final decision has been made.

"All options are still being explored to ensure that the best mix of junior, middle and senior secondary education programs are available in Palmerston to meet the communities needs and to deliver the best possible educational outcomes.

"Government recognises that this is an important decision for residents of Palmerston and the rural area and I would urge both Gerry Wood and Terry Mills to play a more constructive role in the decision-making process."

Mr Stirling said the Government expected to make a decision by the end of the year with preliminary work on the project beginning in 2004.

He also said that the secondary education review team would be holding a public forum in the staff room at Palmerston High School on Tuesday 10 June at 7pm.

The forum is an opportunity for Palmerston and rural area residents to have their say on the future direction for secondary education in the Territory.