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Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's inquiry in to "The Education of Boys". My submission is simply this letter and the attached newspaper clipping.

I think that every person should be regarded as a human being first and as a girl/woman or boy/man (that is, female or male) second. If this perspective were adopted universally, there would be few problems. Common sense needs to apply.

It seems to me that, in Australia, girls and women have sometimes been discriminated against in the past, and some still suffer such discrimination now. Such discrimination can occur at school, in the home, in the workplace, on the sports field, or in the wider community in general. This is sad and the situation should be rectified.

But, I think there is a danger that the pendulum can swing too far in the opposite direction and positive discrimination in favour of girls/women can, in some cases, lead to discrimination against boys/men. The very process of instituting what is known as 'positive discrimination' in order to rectify an imbalance can, in itself, lead to another form of discrimination. Some would argue that this stage has, in fact, been reached, particularly in the education of our young people in schools.

I have attached an article published in "The Sunday Tasmanian" (Hobart, 2 July 2000) which illustrates my point. The case studies in this article are, of course, from the United States of America, but they may serve as a lesson to all Australians. I trust the Committee will note the article, which was written by Christine Jakman in New York, and in particular, the book mentioned in the article, namely "The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men", by Professor Christina Hoff Sommers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I wish you every success in your deliberations and I hope that the outcome will benefit Australians, both young and old, and of both sexes.

Yours faithfully

Walter F Pless