
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Boys: Getting it right

Report on the inquiry into the education of boys

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Education and Training**

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Canberra

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Foreword

No education system, no school, no teacher can guarantee that the needs of every student are fully met. Yet the aim of all involved in education, be they policy makers, administrators or classroom practitioners is, as far as possible, to assist all students to achieve their potential. As well as focussing on defined knowledge and skills objectives, this includes the development of attitudes and values which best equip them for life and for active and productive participation in society.

Yet, the challenges of the classroom are becoming increasingly difficult. Social and economic change has impacted on societal expectations, student needs and attitudes, retention rates and educational policies and programs. Not all students or groups of students have fared equally well in our education system or with social change. Along with socio-economic factors, location and indigeneity, gender has figured significantly in the differing educational outcomes.

In recent decades greater attention has been given to addressing past inequities which had worked to the disadvantage of girls and women in education, the workplace and the broader community. While some of these inequities still exist, many parents, teachers, academics and community workers have expressed concern that, particularly in the area of education, boys are not coping with the changes as well as girls. The evidence seems to support these concerns.

It is imperative that this is addressed, for the sake of the boys themselves and for society more broadly. If boys are not achieving as well as they could, their years of schooling are less enjoyable and less rewarding and they face greater risk of unemployment, under-fulfilment and social problems in their post-school years. Society also loses because of the under-utilisation of their abilities.

There is clearly no single cause for boys' relative under-achievement in education. Nor is there a simple solution. Just as the causes are complex, policy approaches need to be multi-faceted. While this report addresses a number of issues and offers a number of recommendations, it is not exhaustive. However, it is to be hoped that it encourages debate and leads to policy changes which will help achieve improved educational outcomes for boys as well as girls.

Thank you to the many individuals and organisations who contributed to this inquiry and the resulting report. While the report could not make specific reference to all material presented to the inquiry, all contributions helped paint the picture of what is happening with boys' education. Particular thanks to the committee secretariat and to the members of the committee for their painstaking work in compiling this report.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many teachers, a tiny sample of whom we met during this inquiry, who day in and day out labour tirelessly for the benefit of our children. They deserve all the support they can be given.

Mr Kerry Bartlett MP
Chair

Membership of the Committee

40th Parliament – Standing Committee on Education and Training

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Deputy Chair Mr Rod Sawford MP

Members Mr Anthony Albanese MP (from 27/8/02) Mrs Margaret May MP
Mr David Cox MP (to 27/8/02) Mr Chris Pearce MP
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Terms of reference

On 21 March 2000 the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs requested the Employment, Education and Workplace Relations Committee to:

- inquire into and report on the social, cultural and educational factors affecting the education of boys in Australian schools, particularly in relation to their literacy needs and socialisation skills in the early and middle years of schooling; and
- the strategies which schools have adopted to help address these factors, those strategies which have been successful and scope for their broader implementation or increased effectiveness.

After the election in 2001, the name of the Committee was changed to reflect a change in portfolio coverage. At the request of the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Standing Committee on Education and Training readopted the inquiry on 21 March 2002.



List of abbreviations

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IEP	Individual Education Plan
KLAs	Key Learning Areas
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
MULTILIT	Making Up Lost Time in Literacy
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MYRAD	Middle Years Research and Development Project
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
PCYC	Police and Community Youth Club
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment

RD	Reading Disabled
SACSA	South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability Framework
STAR	Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio
TES	Tertiary Entrance Score
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training



Executive Summary

1 Introduction

This inquiry was referred to the Committee in response to growing community concerns about the education of boys. Its aim was to evaluate evidence of boys' educational under-achievement and disengagement from learning as well as strategies being used by schools to address these issues. The Committee has attempted to do this in the wider context of what is occurring socially and economically as well as educationally. Therefore, the Committee has approached its terms of reference quite broadly and considered some factors and issues beyond the early and middle years of schooling.

A wide range of evidence was received in the 231 written submissions and from the 235 witnesses who appeared before the Committee. This evidence, in addition to other research, has convinced the Committee that there is justification for many of the concerns about boys' education and that these are not being adequately addressed within the current framework. However, the Committee also recognises that many schools and individual teachers are achieving excellent outcomes for both girls and boys.

The Committee also believes that efforts to raise the educational achievement of boys can be undertaken without threatening the gains made by girls in recent decades. It is not a competition. The aim of our educational system must be to maximise the achievement of all our students, boys and girls. The responsibility of governments is to ensure their policies assist in this as far as possible.

2 School and post-school outcomes

Evidence of boys' under-achievement

Boys are not achieving as well as girls across a broad spectrum of measures of educational attainment and this is a pattern which is reflected in almost all other OECD countries.

Key indicators include:

- measures of early literacy achievement, where in 2000, 3.4% fewer Year 3 boys and 4.4% fewer Year 5 boys achieved the national benchmarks than girls;
- school retention, where the retention rate of boys to Year 12 was 11 percentage points lower than retention rate of girls in 2001;
- results in most subjects at Years 10 and 12, where girls are achieving higher average marks in the majority of subjects at Year 12 and the gap between boys' and girls' total marks has widened markedly (for example, in NSW the average Tertiary Entrance Score for girls has been up to 19 percentage points higher than for boys);
- admissions to higher education, where approximately 56% of university commencements are females, although this is balanced by higher rates of participation in post-school vocational education by males; and
- other indicators such as suspensions and expulsions which involve many more boys than girls.

A range of factors is affecting boys' achievement at senior level and results need to be interpreted cautiously. Rising retention rates have broadened the purpose of senior schooling beyond university preparation while also changing the social composition of students. This and other factors appear to have operated to the relative disadvantage of boys in senior schooling.

Post-school outcomes

While young men have better access to full-time employment than young women, they are also more likely to be unemployed. Young men are also less likely to be undertaking higher education but they are far more likely to be involved in employment-based training such as apprenticeships.

Longer term measures of participation in education and employment as well as a range of social measures are needed as indicators of the effectiveness of equity policies in education. Current indicators of equity in education are usually limited to the labour market outcomes and incomes of young adults. This overlooks the longer term impact of low achievement and the resulting restriction of some males to lower skilled employment. A range of other measures of social and emotional wellbeing are also relevant indicators of how well family, school and society are meeting the needs of boys and girls. On many of these measures boys and men are not doing well.

The assumption over recent decades appears to have been that girls have urgent educational needs to be addressed and that boys will be all right. The Committee

believes that the evidence seriously challenges this assumption and believes that change is essential.

Resistance to addressing boys' education issues has often argued that rather than gender, the focus should be on "which boys and which girls?". While this is, in itself, a valid question, the fact is that for almost every socio-economic group, boys are underachieving compared to girls. Significantly, the disparity is greatest for those in the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups.

3 Labour market, social and policy change

Education does not occur in isolation from the wider community and must be considered in the context of the social and economic changes that have occurred over recent decades. A range of labour market, social and education policy changes have impacted on the educational experience of boys and girls but appear to have more adversely affected boys.

Labour market change

Over the last 20 years the full-time labour market for young males and females 15 to 24 years of age has collapsed while the school retention rate has doubled. The fall in full-time employment has been partially offset by a rise in part-time employment but the changes have not affected young men and women equally.

While the distribution of part-time and full-time employment between young men and women is now more equitable than it was 20 years ago, young men still enjoy better access to full-time employment. This is because young men have better access than young women to unskilled labouring jobs and jobs in the traditional trades. However, these jobs are declining, both in number and as a proportion of all jobs. The labour market, in all areas, is demanding better communication and interpersonal skills. Generally, boys do not develop these skills to the same extent as girls and this has long-term implications for boys' adaptability to ongoing labour market change.

Social change

The changing status of women and changing family structures have been among the most obvious social developments over recent decades. Some people have emphasised the impact of these changes on boys, particularly the increase in the number of single-parent families headed by women. However, the effect that these social changes have had on the attitudes and educational achievement of boys is difficult to measure.

Policy change

Girls' education strategies and programs have, as a by-product of their original purpose, assisted girls through the social and economic changes of the last 20 years. In comparison, over this period, little has been done to help boys understand and negotiate the same changes. The current gender equity framework is partly a continuation of the earlier approaches to address girls' needs. As such, it does not separately research and identify boys' needs, and at times it is couched in negative terms, even setting boys' needs in the context of what still needs to be achieved for girls.

For this reason the Committee has concluded that the focus of the current approach embodied in *Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools* is too narrow, and recommends that it be recast, focusing on positive values and goals, to provide for distinct but complementary, education strategies for boys and girls. The way forward for both boys and girls is to identify their common and separate educational needs and to implement a policy framework with positive strategies to address those needs, focussing on positive student/teacher relationships, relevant educational programs and quality teaching (*Recommendation 1*).

4 Curriculum and pedagogy

Curriculum and pedagogy, although distinct in theory, merge in practice in the classroom. Boys are more likely than girls to respond negatively or overtly to irrelevant curriculum and poor teaching.

Learning styles

Outcomes-based curriculum frameworks influence pedagogy by emphasising that teachers need to adapt what they do to meet the needs of their students and their school community. While it is dangerous to generalise, boys and girls do tend to prefer different learning styles. Boys tend to respond better to structured activity, clearly defined objectives and instructions, short-term challenging tasks and visual, logical and analytical approaches to learning. They tend not to respond as well as girls to verbal, linguistic approaches. Good teachers respond to the different learning styles of their students and utilise students' preferred learning styles while also aiming to develop the full range of capacities in each student.

However, in many schools insufficient attention is paid to the differing needs of boys and girls and their tendency to favour different learning styles. Traditional primary and secondary schooling tends to favour passive learning to the detriment of those students who prefer interactive and experiential learning styles. Therefore, a much greater emphasis on raising teachers' awareness of the

differences and commonalities in boys and girls preferred learning styles is required in pre-service and in-service teacher education (*Recommendation 2*).

Assessment

Assessment is an important issue in boys' education for two reasons. First, the methods of assessment, their relevancy and interest, will affect boys' motivation and engagement with learning. Second, assessment needs to be an accurate measure of student achievement in a particular area of study. However, there are indications that because of changing assessment methods, boys with relatively poor literacy skills are disadvantaged across much of the curriculum. More research is needed on the impact of assessment methods on the educational achievement of boys and girls (*Recommendation 3*).

The outcomes-based curriculum frameworks are changing assessment tasks so that they have more real world relevance. This should be a positive development for boys. However, whatever the educational programs and assessment methods are, the evidence shows that the most critical factor is the quality of teaching.

5 Literacy and Numeracy

The importance of literacy and numeracy

It is important for all students to develop a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy skills in their early years of schooling. These skills are the most reliable predictor of longer term educational outcomes and personal and economic wellbeing. Poor achievement in literacy and numeracy is linked with early school leaving and this association is stronger for boys than for girls. Poor literacy and numeracy achievement is also linked to lower rates of entry to university and TAFE, higher rates and longer periods of unemployment, the type of work that is accessible, and potential earnings.

There are a number of reasons why boys do not perform as well as girls in literacy tasks. Developmental differences in language and social maturity are significant, as girls, on average, develop language and social skills earlier than boys. Behavioural factors are also important, with boys tending to be less attentive and experiencing more behavioural problems than girls. If not addressed by appropriate strategies such as explicit, structured teaching, attention difficulties and behavioural problems usually have adverse effects on literacy achievement. Action is necessary to raise awareness of these issues so that behavioural and attention problems are addressed early (*Recommendation 4*). Hearing and auditory processing difficulties are also more common in boys. While hearing and eyesight should be professionally tested, simple teaching strategies can help address auditory processing difficulties in the classroom (*Recommendation 5*). There are also

many things parents can do to support the development of pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills in their children and these need to be more actively promoted (*Recommendation 6*).

Effective interventions

Research indicates that a systematic, integrated approach to reading instruction which focuses on phonic word attack skills, sight word recognition (of the most frequently occurring words in print), and the practice of these skills through reading text appropriate for the student's age and reading level is the most effective way to teach children to learn to read. The evidence supporting the importance of explicit, phonics instruction in literacy teaching is substantial. Further, slower than average readers are less likely to make satisfactory reading progress without such explicit instruction and these readers are more likely to be boys. Research also indicates that Reading Recovery is more effective when supplemented with explicit phonics instruction as part of regular classroom teaching. More effective pre-service education and increased professional development for teachers, focussing on appropriate teaching practices should help raise student achievement in literacy. The Committee believes that Commonwealth funding for literacy should be directed towards programs, teacher support and teacher education that recognise the importance of explicit phonics instruction as an essential part of an integrated approach to literacy. (*Recommendations 7, 8, 9 & 10*).

There is an ongoing need to provide support for students in upper primary and secondary school who have not acquired adequate literacy skills. Effective interventions exist but they should be more widely available for students who need them (*Recommendation 11*). Also, secondary teachers should be supported with professional development programs that assist them to enhance secondary students' operational literacy across the curriculum (*Recommendation 12*).

Research also indicates that there are real benefits of small class sizes in the early years of school. The improvements in learning and engagement last beyond the initial years of reduced class sizes and provide most benefit to the most disadvantaged students. Accordingly, the Committee recommends Commonwealth involvement to support the States and Territories to implement reduced class sizes in the early years of schooling (*Recommendation 13*).

6 Schools, teachers and role models

The quality of the relationships between students, teachers and parents is crucial to achieving optimal educational outcomes for all students, and this is particularly true for boys.

Peer relationships

Peer relationships become particularly important to boys during the middle school years and schools need to employ strategies to ensure that peer influences are positive. The types of strategies that are effective include involving students in decision making, mentoring programs and other activities that encourage boys to take responsibility for others. The Committee looked at examples of programs that aim to establish positive alternatives to negative peer cultures and provide effective interventions for boys who are already engaged in destructive behaviours.

Teacher/student relationships

Positive teacher/student relationships are essential to good teaching and learning, especially for boys. Organisational structures in schools can be used to support the establishment and maintenance of good teacher/student relationships. Some witnesses argued that middle school structures and separate senior schools or colleges are examples of organisational structures which can create student centred learning environments to more effectively meet students' needs. However, the effectiveness of any organisational structure depends on the commitment of the school leadership and staff, the level of school resourcing and the quality of teaching.

School structures

Both the absolute number and the proportion of students in Years 10, 11 and 12 who are combining school and work are much higher now than they were 20 years ago. The employment commitments of students combined with higher retention rates and other social changes mean that for contemporary senior students the gap between their life at school and their life outside school is wider now than ever before. Boys are less likely than girls to tolerate the resulting conflicts and this is likely to be a factor influencing their lower retention rate.

There is significant variation in the way schools are structured among the States and Territories. This is also true of assessment systems, with a variety of school-based and external examination structures in existence. The influence of these different structural factors on school retention and engagement has not been adequately examined and this would be a productive area for further research (*Recommendations 14 & 15*).

A number of schools are utilising whole-school choice theory approaches to discipline and welfare. In some situations, such approaches can provide more effective systems to manage student behaviour particularly for students with behavioural problems. However, they are dependent on teachers' commitment to applying the rules and processes of the school's agreed system consistently and

this often requires extensive professional development when such systems are implemented.

There is a question mark over the adequacy of provision for the most vulnerable and disengaged students with behavioural difficulties, most of whom are boys. The Committee has recommended an evaluation of the need for, and effectiveness of, existing programs and that teacher education programs need to place greater emphasis on behaviour management (*Recommendations 16 & 17*).

Teacher training

Teachers who establish positive relationships with students and who recognise and attempt to resolve the conflicts between life at school and outside school can transform a student's school experience. More emphasis on the practical skills teachers need to establish and maintain productive teacher/student relationships is required in pre-service and in-service teacher education (*Recommendation 17*).

Male teachers, fathers and role models

There is widespread concern about the decline in the number of male teachers, particularly in primary schools where the proportion is down to 21 per cent. This has been attributed to a number of factors including the status of teachers in the community, salary, career opportunities and concerns about child protection issues. These issues need to be addressed. State and Territory governments should pay substantial additional allowances to skilled and experienced teachers to retain them in teaching and to provide career paths which attract new teachers (*Recommendation 18*). The admission criteria for teaching courses should be broadened to recognise that motivational factors and particular personal qualities are as important as academic achievement in making a good teacher (*Recommendation 19*). The supply of teachers, and male teachers in particular, should be enhanced by providing HECS-free scholarships to equal numbers of males and females to induce high quality candidates to enter teacher education (*Recommendation 20*).

Male role models do matter and boys benefit by men modelling appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships with other men and women. This is much more effectively demonstrated to boys by men than it can be taught to boys by women in the absence of men. Many schools are using fathers and other positive male role models from the community to the benefit of both boys and girls. Some examples of effective strategies being used by schools are described in this Chapter (*Recommendation 21*).

7 Conclusion

While some educational authorities and many individual schools and educators are responding effectively to these issues, approaches are still too piecemeal.

The lack of consistency between States and Territories and the lack of available, comparable information hinder a more effective approach to dealing with a range of educational issues including boys' education. Therefore the Committee recommends that the Commonwealth review the adequacy of the published national education data (*Recommendation 22*). The Committee also recommends that the Commonwealth and the States and Territories work towards more effectively coordinating their approaches and policy frameworks (*Recommendation 23*).

Overlaps between state and Commonwealth in terms of funding and administration add to these difficulties. A number of the recommendations in this report require a financial commitment from the Commonwealth. The Committee is also concerned that this does not lead to cost shifting from the States or cause them to reallocate funding elsewhere (*Recommendation 24*).

The effects of educational under-achievement for the students themselves and for society generally are too profound to be ignored. The Committee is hopeful that the relevant educational authorities and governments will respond positively to the recommendations made in this report.



List of Recommendations

3 Putting it in context: Labour market, social and policy change

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education, Science and Training act to have MCEETYA revise and recast *Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools* into a new policy framework which is consistent with *The Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* and reflects the positive values expressed in that document:

- the framework should provide an overarching policy structure for joint and distinctive boys' and girls' education strategies which—

- ⇒ address boys' and girls' social and educational needs in positive terms;

- ⇒ allow for school and community input to address local circumstances;

- the achievement of the goals and values expressed in the framework and the boys' and girls' education strategies should be evaluated against a range of social, employment and educational indicators; and

- these indicators should be used by MCEETYA to inform changes in policy and practice to ensure the social and educational needs of boys and girls are being met.

4 Putting it into practice: Curriculum and pedagogy

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the major focus of pre-service and in-service teacher education should be on equipping teachers to meet the needs of all boys and girls. This must include raising teachers' awareness of the differences and commonalities in the learning styles of boys and

girls and the teachers' influence on student outcomes and helping them develop balanced, effective and practical teaching strategies.

The Committee also recommends that the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments jointly fund additional professional development for practising teachers for this purpose, particularly targeting strategies that work with boys.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth fund further research into the impact of different assessment methods on the measured relative attainments of boys and girls.

5 Building strong foundations: Literacy and numeracy

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that as part of a strategy to raise community and parental awareness of the effect certain parenting styles may have on learning and behaviour and the correlation between behavioural problems and learning difficulties; the relevant Ministers should:

- review the available Australian qualitative and quantitative research on behaviour and learning;
- develop information for inclusion in a package for new parents on the effect of particular parenting styles on children's behaviour and learning; and
- develop an information package or packages, for General Practitioners, child-care workers, pre-school teachers and others in contact with parents of pre-schoolers, which includes a guide to services to help parents whose children have behaviour and attention problems.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that:

- a) all State and Territory health authorities ensure that kindergarten children are fully tested for hearing and sight problems; and
- b) the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments jointly fund the implementation of the strategies used in the Victorian study on auditory processing in primary schools throughout Australia. Implementation should include:

-
- professional development for all primary school teachers to raise awareness about the normal development of auditory processing in children;
 - the provision of the relevant auditory screening tests and training to equip teachers to administer preliminary tests with referral to specialised support where needed; and
 - professional development for teachers in practical classroom management and teaching strategies to address the needs of children with auditory processing difficulties.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that:

a) the Commonwealth, in conjunction with the State and Territory governments, coordinate a public information program comprised of the following elements:

- information for all new parents on the importance of developing early language skills and the games and strategies which parents and child carers can use to develop these skills, with follow-up at key stages in their pre-school years;
- basic information on the way that adults traditionally have interacted with boys and girls stressing the importance to parents of developing pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills in both boys and girls while recognising their differences; and
- a periodic, low intensity, media campaign to raise and maintain community awareness about the need to talk and play with babies and young children in ways that develop their pre-literacy and numeracy skills.

b) the Commonwealth, with the State and Territory governments, work with pre-schools and childcare centres to ensure that there is adequate awareness of, and attention to, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skill development in boys as well as girls.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth-funded literacy programs should be required to adopt an integrated approach which includes a strong element of explicit, intensive, systematic phonics instruction.

When programs such as Reading Recovery are used they should be augmented by explicit, intensive phonics instruction as part of regular classroom teaching.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory education authorities ensure that teacher education places much greater emphasis on the pedagogy of teaching literacy and numeracy. Further, pre-service training in teaching literacy should involve an integrated approach which includes explicit, intensive, structured phonics as an essential element in early and remedial literacy instruction.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, State and Territory funding for teachers' professional development be increased on a dollar for dollar basis and that it be directed towards a greater focus on literacy and on early diagnosis and intervention to assist children at risk. This should involve developing skills in intensive phonics instruction as part of an integrated approach to teaching literacy.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth in conjunction with the States and Territories, ensure funding for the provision of a Literacy Coordinator and an early intervention intensive literacy teacher in every Australian primary school, the proportion of a full-time equivalent load depending on the size of the school and the measured level of literacy need.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth ensure that existing funding under the Literacy and Numeracy program to support students in the middle years is used effectively by the States and Territories to provide intensive literacy support programs for disadvantaged students whose need for them is identified by the Literacy Benchmark Tests.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that teacher pre-service and professional development programs assist teachers with practical strategies to develop secondary students' operational literacy and communication skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the State and Territory governments reduce class sizes in Years K to 3 to not more than 20 students by 2005. The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth support this by assisting to meet the additional capital cost of reduced class sizes (in proportion to its current share of capital funding).

6 Making the connections: Schools, teachers and role models**Recommendation 14**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government fund research to evaluate different approaches and strategies to maximise the engagement and motivation of boys and girls in the middle years of school.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth fund comparative research into the influence that different school structures, curricula, assessment systems, the availability of alternatives to senior school (such as TAFE), behaviour management and other factors have on the apparent retention rates and attitudes to school of boys and girls.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth Government fund the assessment of existing programs being run by the States and Territories and community organisations to assist the most vulnerable and disengaged students with a view to the States and Territories expanding successful programs.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education, Science and Training encourage university teacher education faculties to place greater emphasis on the development of behaviour management and interpersonal skills, particularly those that will support teachers to establish effective relationships with boys.

The Committee further recommends that more professional development be provided for this purpose for practising teachers.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that State and Territory Governments urgently address the remuneration of teachers with the payment of substantial additional allowances for skilled and experienced teachers as

an inducement for them to remain in teaching and to attract new teachers by offering more attractive career paths.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth government and university teacher education faculties work together to develop admission processes for teacher education courses that evaluate relevant personal attributes in addition to academic achievement.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth provide a substantial number of HECS-free scholarships for equal numbers of males and females to undertake teacher training. These would be based on merit and take into account other admission criteria developed in line with Recommendation 19.

The scholarships would operate as a rebate of the HECS liability while the recipients were employed by a recognised teaching authority.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that education authorities use their websites and in-service workshops to promote successful strategies being used by schools to involve fathers and other men from the community as positive male role models.

7 Conclusion

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth review all aspects of published national education data to ensure its adequacy to comprehensively inform Commonwealth and State and Territory education policy.

The Committee further recommends that in the event that the States and Territories do not provide the necessary data, the Commonwealth consider making the Australian Bureau of Statistics responsible for its collection and compilation.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that MCEETYA continue to work towards achieving greater consistency in their policy frameworks and greater uniformity in assessment processes so that results, including gender differences, are more readily comparable between States and Territories.

Recommendation 24

Where Commonwealth funding is provided in response to other recommendations in this report, the Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government ensure that the outcomes are monitored and that appropriate conditions are attached to Commonwealth funding to ensure that the States and Territories do not undermine the Commonwealth's contribution by reducing their own financial commitment.