

Conclusion

- 7.1 In addressing the inquiry's terms of reference the Committee has attempted to consider the main issues in a way that clearly reflects the evidence presented to it. Essentially, the Committee has concluded from this evidence and other research that boys' social and educational needs are not adequately addressed by the current *Gender Equity Framework*.
- 7.2 In seeking to address boys' under-achievement and disengagement from learning the Committee has identified a number of key areas for attention and made 24 related recommendations: the gender equity policy framework; curricula, pedagogy and assessment; literacy; student/teacher relationships; behaviour management; the presence of appropriate male role models in schools; and the appropriateness of the school environment to meet the needs of contemporary students. In one way or another, most of these issues are connected to the development and maintenance of positive student/teacher relationships and good teaching which motivates and engages all students.
- 7.3 The Committee notes two other areas of concern that have emerged in its consideration of the issues raised in this report: data collection and monitoring of the outcomes of Commonwealth funding.

Data collection

- 7.4 In undertaking this inquiry the Committee's attention was drawn again to the difficulty of obtaining comparative data sets from eight different State and Territory jurisdictions. An example mentioned in Chapter 2 is the absence of comparable, historical data on truancy, suspension and exclusion from school making it difficult to monitor the most vulnerable young people. The Committee recognises that MCEETYA has made substantial progress on data collection in recent years. For example,

Australia is developing nationally comparable data sets on literacy and numeracy achievement. However, there are still significant gaps which impede Commonwealth, State and Territory researchers and policy makers.

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.

Monitoring Commonwealth funding

- 7.5 The Committee has made several important recommendations in this report that require the Commonwealth to make a financial contribution. However, the Committee is concerned that extra Commonwealth grants for education should not be offset by the reallocation of State and Territory resources elsewhere. Therefore, the Committee expects that the Commonwealth will 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, but actively support, the Commonwealth's commitment.

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.