

9TH MAY, 2001

SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT EDUCATION AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS - RE THE INQUIRY into the education of Boys

I wish to submit the following letter addressing -

- (1) 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-
 - (1) With the introduction of sperm banks, a boy could think that the only contribution to procreation that he can make is the sperm that he produces. This aspect is so widely discussed.
 - (2) As a counsellor, and as a mother to 4 male and 4 female children, and grandmother to 9 boys and 4 girls, I have found from experience that the role of a wise, caring father, especially one who is open to change, can never be underestimated. A female trying to take over in neccessitous circumstances can, generally speaking, not do as well. She is the wrong gender for the role. I believe this role has become cloudy in our present day society with many lesbian women with children and single mothers declaring that the role of a father is, as for as they are concerned, redundant, and can be adeqately performed by male friends or relatives. This is, in fact, not true as these males generally are not significant enough to the child. Parenting requires continual wise authority, understanding, caring and guidance.
 - (3) I believe boys, especially, lose out without a male to guide them wisely as they grow up and form their identity
 - (4) The physical appearance of the male also enhances his authorative and protective role in the family.
- All that I have raised above represent the innate unique attributes of the male which somehow have been relegated to second place in our modern day society.
- (5) I also believe that difficulties must be expected in the education of boys if the changes in the relationships between men and women, brought about to a major extent by the influence of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970's, is not seen as a primary factor to be addressed. These changes are reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of our modern women. This, I believe has thrown a large proportion of the male population into jeopardy in that it affects their identity. If a male is not secure in hñs identity, he cannot make sence of his existance and therefore cannot come to grips with his behaviour and education.

(2)

- (6) I believe it would be desirable to firstly develop and focus on a programme to explore with boys their innate unique attributes. A boy, being secure in the value of his innate qualities to society, can then look further into how he can find other strengths, as his female counterparts have done, and develop a secure identity.
- (7) I believe the lifestyles adopted by men and women can be many and varied but, at the same time complimentary, in a well balanced society.

Sincerely

Maria Mansfield

MARIA R MANSFIELD