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Statement of Views to Federal Government **Inquiry into the Education of Boys**

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Education Failure is only one aspect of " Boy Troubles ." The other two aspects are rising crime rates perpetuated by young males and rising suicide rates in young males. All three aspects need to be dealt with concurrently to deal with the whole problem.

Boys Troubles are very strongly linked to the neglect of Men's Health in our society. Men's Health is neglected by men themselves, all Australian Governments and by Australian industry. The cost to our society of this neglect is enormous both economically and socially. This is so, because boys learn manhood from men they know, especially their father. Many men have not seen nurturing the young as their role, and this has been disastrous for boys.

In both areas, Boys Troubles and Men's Health, if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem. All men need to work to be fine men so together we raise fine young men who are our sons. It does take a tribe to raise a child. That tribe is the Australian community. We do this by becoming proactive in dealing with the difficulties of boys, rather than being constantly reactive to the problems as we are at the moment.

Develop Boys' Education Policies in all State Education Departments that deals with boys increasing educational failure and negative social behaviour.

Develop Units of Study in Teacher Training Universities that identify specific strategies that support boys' preferred learning modes.

Develop a Men's Health Policy at the Federal Government level, so State Governments can follow the Federal Government's lead.

Develop strategies to attract men to teaching, that goes some way towards providing models of fine manhood in the classroom. What models of fine manhood are we currently offering to the boys of Australia?

Educate parents to give good nutrition, exercise and sleep to help boys focus on learning.

Promote men with children to take up the already existing Family Friendly Work Practices, be they employees or employers. Establish some advantage

(financial ?) to all employers who fulfil criteria that demonstrates to the government that they promote Family Friendly Work Practices in their business. Fathers will then be able to spend more time with their children, to give them more attention, both personally, and with their learning both at school and at home. Both home and work needs to be balanced in a man's life.

Promote men to take an active part in boys education as mentors to specific students, especially those at educational risk of either anti social behaviour or learning difficulties.

Create a Minister for Mens' Interests who would deal with both Men's Health matters, Boy troubles (educational failure, rising suicide, rising crime) and the interface between the two areas. This again would set an example to State Governments by the Federal Government.

Create a series of National Tests of Character which would prove both to the boy himself and to the community that he is now recognised and accepted as a man of character who accepts the role of being a man of the Australian community, with its attendant privileges and responsibilities. This could start in Upper Primary years, continuing in High School.

Encourage the sports industry, whatever their game of choice, to accept their social responsibility for modelling fine character in their players, for young men to emulate.

Establish " Drugs are Death " campaign that warns boys off drug taking, including alcohol. The evidence is that drug taking is both an example of risk taking behaviour and an escape from reality. Drug taking is often a precursor to youth crime and youth suicide.

Thankyou for your attention

Yours faithfully

Patrick Toohey