



An Australian Government Initiative

MEETING THE *challenge* summary report

Guiding Principles for Success from the Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme Stage One 2003





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This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training as a quality teacher initiative under the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme*.

Meeting the Challenge: Guiding Principles for Success from the Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme Stage One 2003.

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FOREWORD



Where masculinity was once seen as a virtue, it is now seen by many boys as an obstacle to be overcome.

The report of the Federal parliamentary inquiry into the education of boys, *Boys: Getting it Right*, is sobering reading.

Between 1975 and 1995, the literacy achievement of fourteen year-old boys declined. In 2000, 9 percent of boys in Year Three and 15 percent of boys in Year Five failed to achieve minimum reading benchmarks. This compares with just 6 percent of girls in Year Three and 10 percent of girls in Year Five.

Year 12 retention rates are 11 per cent higher for girls, driving a 6 per cent higher rate of university entry. In some cases, the Year 12 gap between boys and girls is up to 19 percentage points with girls outstripping boys in almost 90 per cent of courses. However, the real problems are at the other end of the educational spectrum.

Recent research shows that, in some instances, boys represent up to two thirds of those in the bottom quartile of school achievers.

Boys represent 80 per cent of students in school disciplinary programmes, and are more likely to be involved in assault and drug related incidents. They are three times more likely to die in a motor vehicle accident, and for people aged 15-24 the rate of male suicide is five times that of the female rate.

The problem is not that girls are doing better than boys – it is instead that boys are not doing as well as they once did.

From teachers and parents in remote Aboriginal communities to prestigious independent schools, there is concern for what is happening to boys.

Methods adopted to achieve long overdue progress in relation to the educational needs of girls under the national policy document *Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools*, written in 1996, may have come at the expense of boys.

Neglectful indifference to critically important professional development of teachers to keep them up to date has exacted its toll. Professor Tony Vinson's 2001 report documented the NSW government then spending only \$25.60 per year per teacher – barely the price of a men's haircut.

Only one in four students studying to be teachers is a man. When you walk into a school to find the only man on site is the gardener, how does that affect the development of both boys and girls?

As Federal Minister for Education I take the *Boys: Getting it right* report very seriously. A range of key individual experts in the education of boys has guided our consideration of the way forward.

Absolutely nothing will be done that in any way threatens the long overdue progress of girls.

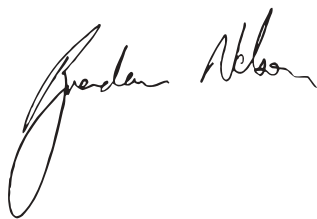
But as policy makers we should be less concerned about offending sensibilities than we are about getting the very best educational outcomes for both boys and girls.

I initiated the *Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme* in direct response to both the report and the concerns of parents. Under the first stage of the programme, the Howard Government has provided grants totalling \$860,000 to 230 primary and secondary schools to document their successful practices in educating boys.

The final report of Stage One makes it clear that a very large number of Australian schools are already meeting the challenge of boys' education through innovative approaches to engagement of boys. The guiding principles and case studies in this report provide a practical guide for all teachers and schools in search of success with boys.

Congratulations to the schools, teachers, parents and students who made Stage One a great success. I now look forward to the next phase of the *Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme* in 2004. During this period a number of centres of excellence, or 'lighthouse' schools, will be established across Australia to champion, demonstrate and disseminate best practice in boys' education.

The next generation will pay a very high price if we do not get this right and get it right soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brendan Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Dr Brendan Nelson MP
Minister For Education, Science And Training

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The programme is indebted to a number of representatives of State and Territory education departments and Catholic and Independent systems who undertook the challenging task of selecting the schools for the programme.

We wish to thank the many hundreds of school principals, teachers, parents, students and members of school communities who were enthusiastically involved in their school and cluster programmes and generously gave of their time and effort to document and report on their findings.

THERE'S SOMETHING about schools and boys

From data on student achievement, attendance and engagement, it is clear that the education of boys is a matter for concern. This holds true throughout the developed world and is evident in Australia in a range of educational contexts and measures, whether it be:

- a coeducational primary school's finding that academic outcomes in literacy and numeracy for boys are below those of girls, with 75 per cent of all students in support groups being boys; boys have also accounted for 82 per cent of all behaviour records, 98 per cent of all serious incidents and 100 per cent of suspensions over the last two years, with senior boys the most likely to offend;
- the outcomes of a comprehensive review by a Tasmanian secondary school which, among other things, revealed that parents, teachers and students at the school identified student motivation and engagement, particularly of boys, as a significant concern – 95 per cent of all students sent to detention at lunchtime were boys from Grades 7 and 8; 80 per cent of students suspended were boys; and boys were well below girls in State-wide tests of literacy and numeracy; or
- one New South Wales school's analysis of student behaviour in the playground and records in their discipline files which revealed that boys were involved in 95 per cent of situations involving conflict or inappropriate behaviours and were far less capable of managing such situations than girls.

One of the most persuasive and impassioned arguments for why something had to be done about our approach to educating boys was given by the assistant principal of a Northern Territory primary school, who explained:

"In 2000, having spent 15 years in secondary schools (and a period in staff development), I had been fortunate in achieving a shift to a position in primary schools. Over three years, and three different primary schools ... one of the most obvious issues that has become clear to me is that the education of boys is problematic.

Not only had I been the only male teacher in one of these schools, and one of two males in the others, but the statistics I was able to collect were compelling. It was clear that for the six-year period that I was able to obtain data, boys had achieved significantly poorly when compared with girls at all levels of schooling from Year 3 Numeracy and Literacy to Year 12 results in all subjects.

Most importantly, I was able to collect data on boys' behaviour management that demonstrated that boys were more frequently alienated from school than girls, with boys being 'in trouble' 86 per cent to girls 14 per cent (sample of 500 data entries on behaviour management collected from two urban primary schools).

From discussing my observations and experiences with others, two ideas crystallised. The first was that the boys who I was dealing with on a day-to-day basis (for poor behaviour or lack of achievement) seemed to lack 'a sense of belonging' to the classroom (not playground). Second, that these boys also seemed to honestly lack understanding of what it was that alienated them from their classroom teachers (they knew what 'rule' they had broken, but not why they were 'constantly' in trouble with their teacher).



It is important to note that this does not relate to all boys for, to be honest, successful boys rarely came to my attention ... only those who were 'at risk' or who were 'boys behaving badly' were regularly in my focus. These ideas created a strong cognitive tension and in 2001–02 (a boys' education programme) was initiated as our school's attempt to assist those identified boys to develop a stronger sense of belonging and, thereby, in the longer term to achieve better academic results at school."

In a somewhat similar vein, a cluster of schools in rural Queensland cogently observed when it found that in nearly all classes in the junior years of high school, girls' academic means outscored those of boys by half a rating or more on a five-point rating scale, 'it was obvious that this was unacceptable, and could not be ignored'.

A LIGHTHOUSE programme in response



The Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, commissioned the national *Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme* to assist schools in their efforts to address the educational needs of boys by identifying, documenting and disseminating good practices in teaching and learning in boys' education.

The programme, which forms part of the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme*, commenced in 2003 and comprises:

- Stage One, managed by Curriculum Corporation, during which schools from across Australia, some working in 'clusters' or groups, have received funding of up to \$5000 each to document and showcase successful practices in the education of boys, and which is the subject of this report; and
- Stage Two, beginning in 2004, where approximately 30 clusters of schools will be established across Australia to promote successful practices in educating boys, with each cluster containing a 'lighthouse' school to support the professional learning of teachers in schools around them.



Of the 1407 applications received, a total of 110 projects involving almost 230 schools were selected to undertake projects in Stage One, designed to provide an informed basis from which improved boys' education can be developed and promoted in Australian schools. In addition, an *Associate Schools* programme was established to engage schools and clusters that were not selected for Stage One, but still chose to pursue their project to improve education for boys. These schools were provided with resources and information by Curriculum Corporation, including updates on the programme website at <http://www.boyslighthouse.edu.au>.

Stage One of this programme has seen a vast amount of activity undertaken by schools to improve the educational engagement and outcomes of boys which, across the 110 projects, has resulted in:

- greatly improved awareness among teachers and other school community members of issues in the education of boys and appropriate, evidence-based strategies to address these;
- a significant trialling of new pedagogical approaches designed to improve boys' learning outcomes (particularly in relation to literacy) and their engagement in learning, commonly related to research findings on approaches which are more effective with boys;
- increased dialogue within school communities and across clusters of schools about boys' education and how to improve it;
- evidence of improved educational outcomes, particularly in reading literacy, of some boys participating in projects;
- many instances of improved levels of attendance and engagement with learning by boys, and improved behaviour as a result, both at school and at home; and
- effective use of positive role models and mentors from within the school and the wider community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES for success in educating boys

Stage One of the programme resulted in a wide range of activity to advance the educational achievement of boys. What is clear from this stage of the programme is that school-based initiatives can be enhanced by:

- developing an even stronger relationship between local school or cluster activities and the research evidence of what works;
- creating more coherent programmes of activity to improve the education of boys by linking the various categories of school-based activity outlined in this report; and
- focusing on professional development for teachers as a priority to enable them to confidently expand the range of teaching and learning experiences in their classrooms.

A common set of guiding principles has been identified from good educational practice which has emerged from this programme and key research in the area of boys' education.

The following set comprises 10 interrelated core propositions which ought inform the development and implementation of ongoing programmes to improve the education of boys in schools.

1 Collect evidence and undertake ongoing inquiry on the issue, recognising that schools can do something about it.

Boys' education is an issue of concern within schools in Australia as evidenced by a significant body of research and the experience of the 110 project schools and clusters. It also is an issue that schools can do something to address. This requires the school to gather and analyse its own student achievement and other data (eg attendance, behaviour incidents, student opinion survey data) on a gender basis and identify the needs of specific boys and students 'at risk'. Such inquiry should involve sustained data collection, reflection and evaluation at the local level, informed by research in this area. The school then can develop, implement and continue to evaluate and amend appropriate strategies and targets tailored to the unique and specific needs of students.

2 Adopt a flexible, whole school approach with a person and team responsible.

Improving the educational outcomes of boys requires a whole school approach based on a common vision and a coherent, integrated set of programmes across the broad range of activity noted in this report (ie pedagogy, curriculum and assessment; literacy and communication skills; student engagement and motivation; behaviour management programmes; and positive role models for students). Such a whole school approach is more effective with the identification of a leader in the school who is responsible for its implementation, and the establishment of an appropriate team to support the leader. It also requires a degree of flexibility on the part of the school when needed in relation to structural and other arrangements to support the programmes adopted (eg single-sex classes and activities, withdrawal programmes). This approach should be integrated with existing school improvement strategies and should engage the broader school community.

3 Ensure good teaching for boys, and all students in all classes.

Improved education for boys depends, just as it does for girls, upon good teaching of all students in all classes. While there are many recipes for good teaching in schools, teachers demonstrating good practices all have the following features in common.

- Having high expectations for all students, knowing their students well and listening to their students.

- ❑ Reflecting on current teaching practice in terms of the information collected by the school and an informed evidence base of research.
- ❑ Using a range of teaching techniques – if all a teacher does is talk at the students and writes things on a board, they are unlikely to learn very much. All learners require variety and teachers need to vary the ways in which they pass on information to, and engage, students.
- ❑ Structuring their teaching so it supports student learning – the teacher is the trained, professional adult in the class, so must ensure that the key messages and lessons are learned. This means they need to make sure that students understand the main points as they proceed, make connections to other things that have been learned, build on what students already know and keep reinforcing key messages.
- ❑ Involving students in learning activities and encouraging their participation – learning requires that students do things, as well as having them explained or shown to them. Teachers need to actively involve students in solving problems for themselves and get students working together in groups so they learn social and cooperative skills.
- ❑ Providing positive feedback and praise – an important part of teaching young people is providing them with feedback on their work. Teachers need to let students know how they are going in general, what their strengths and weaknesses are and how they can continue to improve.
- ❑ Being open, flexible, fair and consistent in dealing with students, having a ready sense of humour and being prepared to negotiate and discuss teaching and learning with students.
- ❑ Making connections with the community – involving the students’ parents and other important community members helps demonstrate to students the importance the teacher attaches to the programme and their work.

4 *Be clear about the kinds of support particular boys require.*

Boys are not a homogeneous group and not all boys can be treated the same. Gender intersects with a range of other factors, including developmental and sub-cultural factors, to affect each student’s experience of school. Some boys may experience a tension between being masculine and engaging with and being good at school; with the result that demonstrating their masculinity can inhibit participation and performance in class, making school a negative experience. Not all boys, however, experience or identify with aspects of masculinity that conflict with educational engagement, and there are many boys who do successfully integrate success in schooling and growing up as adult males. Hence the school needs to clarify how best to support each boy in his learning at school.

5 *Cater for different learning styles preferred by boys.*

Students learn in different ways. There is, in this context, substantial research as well as school and cluster experience through these projects to suggest that boys (as well as many girls, of course) commonly respond more positively to learning experiences that:

- ❑ have a practical focus and physical or hands-on dimension;
- ❑ they see as relevant and having a real world connection;
- ❑ use thinking skills focused on actual problems;



- challenge them by requiring higher order and conceptual thinking;
- have clear instructions and structured sessions in manageable chunks;
- enable them to work with others as well as individually;
- provide for a range of ways in which work can be presented; and
- provide them with a degree of involvement in decisions about content and opportunities to negotiate their learning as a valued stakeholder.

That said, good practice in boys' education also seeks to broaden the range of ways in which boys view themselves as learners and the strategies they adopt, while strengthening their capacity to develop responsibility and self-awareness, and to value success at school.

6 Recognise that gender matters and stereotypes should be challenged.

Acceptance of gender identity is important for all students. Boys should be encouraged to value being male and the positive virtues this entails. Equally, the negative aspects of stereotypical views of masculinity, often manifest in bullying, aggressive and physical responses to conflict and difference, or a conscious disengagement from school, need to be challenged. Schools and teachers are well placed to promote and model values and behaviours that are fundamental to people learning and working together. Schools can enable boys to broaden the ways in which they relate to others as they develop and grow, and exercise power, control, competition, cooperation, freedom, responsibility and choice; thereby enhancing their development as adult males in modern Australian society. Schools should, in this context, seek to establish a culture where achievement is seen as 'cool' and desirable for all students and is accepted as something to be celebrated.

7 Develop positive relationships, as they are critical to success.

Relationships are crucial in any young person's schooling, especially the teacher–student relationship within the classroom and in the broader learning environment of the school. Particularly important for success at school is that each and every boy should know and feel that there are people in the school who care about him and his development. Beyond this, boys will benefit where there is consistency of approach between the home and the school, and parents are actively engaged in the education of their children and in developing 'shared values' with the school. The experience of clusters in this programme also has demonstrated the benefits to be gained from increased cooperation between schools and, in particular, sharing of strategies and resources to improve the education of boys.

8 Provide opportunities for boys to benefit from positive male role models from within and beyond the school.

Boys in school want and need to develop positive relationships with significant males within and beyond the school, most obviously their fathers and teachers, but also older male students and members of the wider community. Such role models provide inspiration and support for young boys seeking to develop their own understanding of how to become an effective adult male in the community, and also can assist in the development of clear goals and pathways to future learning and personal development.

9 Focus on literacy in particular.

There is little doubt that boys' relatively weaker performance in literacy than girls has been one of the threshold factors leading to the focus on improving education for boys. Literacy, especially in the early years of school, is critical for educational success at school and subsequent successful participation in the community and its economy. There is substantial evidence to show that effective literacy for boys requires a balanced approach which includes some whole language teaching, but also direct instruction of phonics and phonemic awareness

to improve outcomes across the board. Effective teaching and assessment should incorporate a recognition of the range of literacies students require today, including multimedia and emerging literacies in which young people, and particularly boys, are achieving success. This is a strength that can be built on. Beyond this, there is a clear need to ensure that processes are in place to identify students at risk of under-performance (primarily but not only in literacy) as early as possible, so they can be provided with appropriate, targeted support (eg one-to-one or small group tutoring).

10 Use information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a valuable tool.

It is well documented that boys, and especially boys who are under-achieving at school, respond favourably to the use of ICTs as a means of engaging them in learning activities. Many of the schools and clusters involved in this programme have drawn on the motivational and educational powers of ICTs. The interactive nature of many new technologies helps create learning environments where boys can learn by doing, receive immediate feedback and continually build new knowledge and enhance their level of understanding. This enables students to develop a richer and deeper understanding of core knowledge and skills and to lead their teachers in an area where they are often experts and adults are learners. ICTs that include an emphasis on application and tailoring education to the needs of individual learners are also supportive of a shift in practice to more learner-centred approaches, which encourage the active participation of boys in the learning process, rather than the passive absorption of knowledge.



ACTIVITIES TO improve the education of boys

Schools are, of course, at different stages in their development in relation to addressing boys' educational needs, and hence will need to plan their approaches accordingly. Some schools already will have whole school approaches supported by a comprehensive array of programmes, while others will only be starting to dip their toes in the water.

In the case of schools just starting out, bear in mind that every journey, no matter how long, begins with a single step. It is important, therefore, that schools target their activities to the areas most in need. The guiding principles already outlined will direct schools in that task, and the experiences of the 110 schools and clusters involved in this programme provide schools with concrete ideas of what might be done.

In broad terms, these schools and clusters implemented programmes and strategies in five key areas:

- 1. pedagogy, curriculum and assessment;
- 2. literacy and communication skills;
- 3. student engagement and motivation;
- 4. behaviour management programmes; and
- 5. role models for students.

Often these categories overlapped, and they were not always clear-cut, but they provide a basis for thinking about and planning to improve the education of boys.

To make things even more manageable, the five categories have been further sub-divided in the discussion below to provide a snapshot, with quotes from the project reports, of the range of activities undertaken by schools and clusters that proved effective. Schools and teachers who are interested can then obtain further examples and information from the full report of Stage One *Meeting the Challenge: Guiding Principles for Success from the Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme, Stage One, 2003, Final Report*, available at the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) website at <http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/boyseducation/> or by emailing educatingboys@dest.gov.au.



PEDAGOGY, CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Learning styles and teaching practice

'Before I set any task now, I find myself thinking about how it will work for the boys – I didn't do that before.'

This was arguably the most popular focus of schools and clusters involved in the programme. In general terms it involved efforts to broaden the range of teaching activities to better match the needs of boys, often with an equal focus on improving the nature and quality of teacher–student relationships.

Starting from the premise that 'boys can and will learn successfully if the right approach to learning occurs', Pretty Beach and Wamberal Public Schools, for instance, sought to 'modify the way we teach to accommodate the way that boys learn best, without disadvantaging girls'.

To achieve this, the schools have developed a resource pack on the topic of beach and surf safety they could use when the local surf lifesaving association runs its beach programme for schools. This highly professional pack contains concrete advice on effective teaching strategies that induce maximum student engagement and achievement, a range of units in such learning areas as Health and Physical Education, Science, English, Human Society and its Environment, and Visual Arts, and a template for students to develop their own website on beach and surf safety. Student assessment procedures are built into the units, along with final student and teacher evaluation forms.

While the detail of the units is beyond the scope of this summary, the cluster has used its experience to develop the following detailed advice for teachers on strategies to adopt to engage boys more in learning.

- ❑ Choose interesting topics that appeal to boys (and girls too!).
- ❑ Build choice into learning activities and let boys set the pace of their own learning (within reason of course).
- ❑ Set goals, which are evaluated at the end of the session, and 'let boys ... negotiate with you how much will be done and what form it will take; (but) get them to write it down in advance and sign it!'
- ❑ 'Arrange an activity to discover which way they learn best, try some different ways; which way produced the best result? Then, when you are doing a class task, work directly with a small group who like assistance and direction, and let the others do what suits them best. Be flexible.'
- ❑ Include hands-on work and use technology along the way – 'If there is a screen involved, buttons get pushed, something glows or makes an electronic noise, the chances are you have their attention already'.
- ❑ 'Learning activities need to be structured so that boys get early and demonstrable success.'
- ❑ Write instructions as well as giving them orally and use proven, effective teaching strategies such as *Gardner's Multiple Intelligences* and *Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats*.
- ❑ Definitely use humour.
- ❑ Talk about the differences in the ways boys and girls learn – 'it is good to raise awareness ... and encourage them to think about why they do what they do'.
- ❑ 'Some boys respond very well to male role models so it can be a good idea to bring in outside expertise, but make sure they do exemplify the qualities you are looking for.'
- ❑ 'Establish a very strong anticipation of success, talk about what success in learning is and how we recognise it, and praise, praise, praise.'



Hands-on learning

'It made me ready for school work ... I got warmed up.'

'He is simply loving hands-on cooking, working outside of the school. He comes home each time and makes for us what he has done during the day and is very keen to talk about what he has done. He is now talking about wanting to follow this career path at high school.'

Hands-on learning is a well-established approach to engage students, and in particular boys, in a range of curriculum areas by providing more practical, visual and tactile activities that emphasise physical movement and interaction. A number of schools sought to address foundational educational skills for boys through practical and experiential processes, while others adopted highly structured and purposeful use of hands-on learning to ensure that higher order outcomes were achieved.

The Mitchelton Cluster of schools sought to address the learning needs of a number of at-risk boys by engaging them in a practical, challenging and interesting hands-on task that encouraged risk-taking in a supportive environment and helped develop their self-esteem.

Each of the three schools selected 10 boys from Years 6–8, considered as at risk but capable of improvement with the right support, to jointly build a working billycart. After an initial team-building 'high ropes course' and literacy workshop relevant to the project on a cluster basis, each school ran a series of five half-day workshops to complete the job, which incorporated a literacy session with defined tasks, and a session building the billycart. All this activity culminated in a concluding literacy workshop and public presentation of the students' work to teachers, parents, fellow students and the local media, as well as testing of the billycarts in appropriate areas around the schools.

Action research evidence collected by the cluster suggests that the project successfully:

- 1. improved the boys' literacy, with a number of classroom teachers indicating that the boys 'were writing more than usual, completing literacy tasks and showing an interest and willingness to work on literacy tasks';
- 2. increased their engagement with learning – not just the obvious interest in building the carts and the high ropes course but, 'in an apparent contrast to the research, the other event that 25 of the 26 boys enthusiastically recalled as a highlight was the poetry sessions' conducted with a guest poet as part of the project;
- 3. increased their motivation and enthusiasm for school and reduced unexplained absences and disruptive behaviour; and
- 4. enhanced self-esteem – as two of the participants observed, 'I'm more confident now' and 'next time I will have a go at new stuff'.



Beyond this, a significant number of teachers are now more aware of issues surrounding the education of boys, and the cluster schools are 'exploring strategies and viable solutions' to improve its programme; including timetabling some single-sex classes with the same-sex teachers so these types of opportunities can continue for boys, and so girls also can benefit from what the cluster has learned.

LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Literacy programmes for boys

'I enjoy the challenge of writing a story which is good and finished well. I like it when I can choose my own topic because I have control over what's going to happen and how the characters think and feel.'

Many schools investigated, implemented and/or evaluated highly structured approaches to literacy, including the teaching of phonics, and their implications for the literacy development of boys. Others took a broader, engagement-related approach, developing programmes to make literacy more appealing and hence engaging for boys.

The Trinity Gardens Primary School Cluster of six schools surveyed students about their preferred learning styles and discovered a need to develop better linkages between literacy activities and a range of experiences in the arts, technology, science and physical education to help students see literacy as 'an important and meaningful part of the world'. This common theme was then addressed in the following different, contextually relevant ways in each of the cluster schools.

- East Marden Primary School explored ways to improve boys' literacy levels with guided reading and factual texts. This included the introduction of Lexile levels for all students in Years 3–7 and the identification and coding of library sources to indicate, for example, which contain quizzes that engage boys.
- East Torrens Primary School sought to improve boys' engagement in literacy through an examination of learning styles and the development of individual charts to enable teachers to plan activities that cater for these. This also enabled students to seek assistance from others in their class with strengths in particular areas.
- Marryatville Primary School explored the link between the culture of the school and boys' literacy achievements, including a challenge to stereotypical views of masculinity for boys, through a focus on heroes and the use of the novel *Billy Elliot*. The school also matched Year 6–7 boys to boys in a Reception class to read picture books to them with bullying as a theme; thereby breaking down some of the 'pressures to conform' and reducing younger students' perceptions of older ones as sources of fear.
- Norwood Primary School improved boys' literacy by addressing issues of engagement through the use of a fitness programme in the early years before and then during the middle of the literacy block. This worked better when conducted before the block, and seemed to energise the boys, rather than breaking up the session once it had started. The school also focused on feelings and getting along in the primary years which, among other things, saw boys expressing their feelings through the journal entries they kept.
- Thorndon Primary School promoted writing for a purpose with sustained writing about a variety of topics and in varied genres, which children shared and discussed as an audience for each other's work.
- Trinity Gardens Primary School improved boys' literacy engagement through the use of mentors at various levels, including older boys mentoring younger ones in how to negotiate differences with others; male teachers running an interactive programme to challenge 'the narrow construction of gender', which limits many boys' progress in literacy; and parents, grandparents and adults in the community providing experiential learning opportunities for both boys and girls in gardening, publishing, science, technology, sports and more.



Quantifiable outcomes from the project include a reduction in non-attendance, lateness and suspensions, and improved achievement in reading as determined by *Reading Recovery* levels of students in Years 1 and 2 and the *Waddington Reading Age* test used in Years 3 and 5.

Literacy programmes for boys with special learning needs

'Can I finish this whole book?' This is an unheard of phenomenon in our household! We are noticing his confidence growing in other areas as well, so suffice to say, we are just delighted.'

Somewhat similar to the previous category, these projects applied a structured, systematic approach that commonly involved phonics, but also often linked to issues of student behaviour and management, and the engagement in literacy of boys with special learning needs.

Acton Primary School, which has 'significantly restructured and resourced' its programme over time to focus on the explicit teaching of literacy skills, used its project to respond to the fact that, although improvements in literacy outcomes had been achieved, 'many of our Grade 1 and 2 boys were still not achieving the anticipated literacy targets'. What is more, a small number of them also were 'manifesting their failure and frustration through anger and misbehaviour in class and were beginning to impede the learning programme of others'.

In this context, the school initiated a trial of its own *ABC Read* programme, which built on existing *Reading Recovery* and *Bridges* programmes in place, with six Grade 1 and 2 boys from the target group. *ABC Read* provided them with one-to-one tuition from trained literacy tutors for half-hour sessions four times a week over 10 weeks. Each session focused explicitly on the acquisition of reading, writing and spelling skills and followed the same basic format:

- 1. vocabulary building – games and activities to build basic sight and high frequency vocabulary;
- 2. reading of familiar text – for practice, enjoyment and fluency to develop competency;
- 3. instructional reading – introduction of a new text, teaching of reading strategies and skills;
- 4. written work – responding to text with co-constructed sentences, and a focus on alphabet and spelling patterns within words;
- 5. literacy games and activities – enjoyment, reinforcement of skills and strategies; and
- 6. reflection time – dialogue between the student and tutor to provide immediate feedback.

Each of these components was deliberately short, structured, sequential and matched closely to the student's needs. Expectations and instructions were concise and clearly explained, and all progress and achievement received immediate, positive feedback.

Early indications are that *ABC Read* has been 'very successful, particularly in evaluating the improvement of the boys' literacy skill over the 10-week period'. Data collected shows that the boys made 'outstanding progress in their reading development'; with *Waddington Reading 2* results showing each boy improving 7–13 months in reading age over that time. That said, although 'their acquisition of literacy skills was undoubtedly accelerated when compared to their chronological age', the school recognises the need to ensure that these 'outstanding results' are sustained over the longer term.

Beyond these literacy outcomes, tutors in particular, but also mainstream class teachers, have noted improvements in students' attitudes to school and general behaviour in class. This in turn is reflected in improved levels of student enthusiasm and the confidence with which they will attempt new tasks; as evident in the comment of one boy confronted with a reading task in class who confidently responded that 'I can do this 'cos she taught me'.



Student engagement and motivation

Programmes for at-risk boys in mainstream classrooms

'Most of all I enjoy writing about things I care about.'

These projects sought to provide special assistance to boys at risk of significant educational under-achievement, while keeping them in the mainstream classroom. In several cases this involved programmes to track the educational performance of senior secondary students at risk of dropping out of school and provide them with appropriate support, such as tutorials and other individual assistance, while also reviewing teaching and learning approaches across the board. Others focused on the total school experience for students and interventions that might make learning more practical, experiential, relevant and engaging for boys in particular.

Murwillumbah High School sought to build on programmes already in place by creating a ripple effect from a single group to the school as a whole. It began with 'dropping a stone in the water' of a small group of 15–20 Year 7–9 boys whose challenging behaviour was disrupting their own learning and that of other students. This group was supported with strategies from the *Rock and Water*¹ programme, the use of a tutorial centre for withdrawal in extreme cases, and mentoring. Taken together, these strategies were designed to enhance self-esteem and social interaction, with the purpose of generating more engagement and less disruptive behaviour, while the peer tutoring and targeted teaching and learning support for these boys was expected to improve their learning outcomes.

The second stage was a 'ripple out' to a second group of boys in Years 7–10 who were exposed to aspects of *Rock and Water* and leadership and responsibility activities to encourage more positive and autonomous behaviour. This involved the resourcing of boys' mentoring initiatives for 20 boys in Year 10 with the express purpose of creating a lift in school tone 'because more male leadership figures would be engaged in positive behaviour and would receive recognition in an appropriate way from school authorities for their efforts'.

A further spreading of the effect was created as a result of the first and second elements flowing on to a much larger group via an altered climate over time – from a situation where 'once it was "uncool" for males to be seen to be engaged' to one where 'the incidence of negative male behaviour would now decrease school wide'. This last phase, however, requires a significant cultural change which extends well beyond the scope of this project and report.

To date, the most successful outcome of these activities has been 'the sustained improvement in the communication skills and positive behaviour' of the targeted boys in both the *Rock and Water* and Year 10 mentoring programmes. 'Evidence collected over the last two years shows that the boys that have been targeted are less likely to be chronic behavioural problems in the later years of their schooling.' The *Rock and Water* programme has received a positive response from parents and staff, and there have been fewer discipline referrals from the boys involved.

Teaching staff have, as a flow on from these activities and the range of supportive professional development provided by the school, changed their teaching practices including their timing and type of assessment items used, behaviour management practices, use of audiovisual and other teaching aids, and rearrangement and reorganisation of teaching areas and classrooms. Action research evidence suggests this has contributed to less confrontation and stress in classrooms, and the school now intends to provide professional learning for staff on a range of boys' education issues with a focus on practices used in mainstream classrooms. On a very encouraging note, feedback from parents has shown 'there is a flow-on effect of their (ie the boys') changed attitude and behaviour into their family circle. The boys are more ready and confident in conveying their views and opinions and listening to other members of the family'.

¹ *Rock and Water* is a martial arts based physical and social skills development programme using games and activities to develop self-control, self-esteem and self-confidence, which was used by a number of project schools and clusters in different contexts.

Overall, the school feels the ripple effect has worked, but recommends that adopting it to effect changes depends on targeting a small, high need group of boys to start in an attempt to 'extinguish extreme behaviour', and then targeting a larger group of 'more moderate needs boys' whose negative behaviour needs to be addressed.

Withdrawal programmes for at-risk boys

'I thought our project was good because we got to get out of the class and we got to do different things.'

These projects arguably dealt with more difficult and demanding educational situations than the previous category, and sometimes involved schools in rural or remote locations with limited access to resources. While schools adopted a variety of withdrawal programmes for boys, several sought to move beyond a simple deficit model that stereotyped boys as 'problems', and instead explored and adopted programmes designed to provide intellectual challenge, connect to the broader community, and ensure high levels of student support. Such programmes do, however, often require high staff-student ratios and can occasion difficulties of reintegration of students into the mainstream classroom.



The 'withdrawal' programme at Ferny Grove State High School catered for a group of boys the school identified as not engaged in a learning process that would 'maximise their academic achievements, their participation in extra-curricular activities, their interpersonal skills and their commitment to learning, as well as their prospects for future careers and productive membership of society once they leave school'.

A young and enthusiastic male member of staff was released to work with a target group of 15 Year 9 boys every Friday for 19 weeks. The first three lessons of the school's four-period day saw students withdrawn from their normal classes in groups of five to work with the teacher on such topics as setting goals, managing time, meeting homework obligations, improving behaviour, relating well to adults and peers, resolving conflicts, enjoying reading more, focusing on their strengths and celebrating their successes. The final Friday lesson was devoted to a whole group team-building exercise and outdoor activities.

In broad terms the school has found that the project 'made a small group of boys who might otherwise have continued to feel under-valued within the school system feel that they were special, worthy of consideration, and deserving of teachers' time, interest, energy and enthusiasm. Given this sense of worth, some of the boys have started to develop a sense of their own worth, to put greater emphasis on their own capacity to achieve, and to take responsibility for their own actions and their potential to achieve'. In addition, the project boys had fewer referrals to the school's deputy principal for behavioural issues and experienced fewer suspensions than in previous terms.

An important aspect of the success of the project in the school's view was being clear about which boys ought be involved. The school has in place many outlets for student participation which in turn can lead to recognition and success. The at-risk boys in the project were chosen because they rarely engaged in such activities and generally were only ever noticed for 'the wrong reasons – poor behaviour, disappointing report cards, cautionary counselling'. Through the programme, however, they would, every Friday, be 'treated as special' in positive and constructive ways.

Beyond this, the school, on the basis of its experience, would strongly recommend that meeting the needs of such at-risk boys ultimately requires a combination of:

- early identification of boys who are likely to 'have difficulties achieving well, fitting in socially with their peers and relating well to their teachers';
- reinforcement of the role of all teachers, but especially form teachers, in 'establishing a good relationship with boys, taking an interest in their welfare and achievements, and making early contact with parents if problems seem likely to arise'; and
- building closer links with feeder primary schools to provide 'early guidance and support to boys whose primary school records are of concern'.

Adventure and outdoor challenge

'It was good because we got moving instead of sitting in the classroom all day.'

These projects had, as their major focus, adventure activities, camps or other events that contribute to boys' personal development, self-esteem and confidence as well as overall mental and physical health. Such projects specifically sought to provide boys with the opportunity to demonstrate such important personal characteristics as responsibility, accountability, commitment, creativity, courage and generosity, and to generally broaden concepts of masculinity and how it is enacted. The best of such programmes also consciously sought to ensure significant intellectual challenge as a core focus and hence demonstrate educational outcomes for participants as well as the more obvious behavioural results.

The Moyne Cluster of schools (including Woolsthorpe Primary School) is at the start of a three-year process of implementing proposals that will 'result in cutting-edge teaching and learning programmes' in the middle years of school. A key focus in this regard will be providing, where possible, 'differentiated learning and teaching opportunities' to cater for the individual needs of the cluster's middle years cohort.

The cluster project sought, in this context, to trial a range of 'adventure and experiential arts programmes as feasibly as possible, as well as providing for the trialling of both gender inclusive and all-boys activities'. In effect, providing boys with 'tasks that were challenging, but ultimately able to be successfully completed by all'.

The centrepiece of the project for the one secondary school in the cluster was a 12-day 'extreme camp wilderness therapy programme' for five Year 8 and 9 boys who were becoming disconnected from their school education. The primary aim of the experience was to assist them with goal setting, improving their interpersonal communication and social skills, and helping them to develop a positive self-image. This was achieved in 'an environment that would provide real rather than virtual challenges ... (through a programme) conducted in an atmosphere of adventure, exploration and fun where effort would bring rewards and actions would have consequences'.

Side by side with this, all five primary schools in the cluster provided students with a programme of 'creative arts experiential therapy activities' that were 'gender inclusive' and taught new skills in a non-sequential two-day framework. More specifically, one very small school took its entire nine students for two days of training and application in screen-printing techniques at South West TAFE in Warrnambool, and the other four primary schools took selected Year 5–6 students to participate in two days of silk painting and 2-D sculpture workshops at the Port Fairy studio of professional artist, Kathryn Weatherly.



The three larger primary schools in the cluster were allocated resources to develop in-school programmes for targeted Year 4–6 boys: 'the shed' project at Koroit and District Primary whereby Year 5 boys displaying major behavioural issues worked with a contracted carpenter to equip a former storage shed (though initial behaviour problems did require a restructuring of the group to involve more engaged boys); woodwork with Max and Ted at Port Fairy Consolidated which saw Year 4 boys at risk of disengagement from school participating in a school-based carpentry project with two senior community mentor-tutors; and a 'Groundforce' project at Woolsthorpe Primary whereby three Year 6 boys led other Year 5–6 students in a major school-based landscaping and grounds improvement activity.

Overall the project has, despite a range of logistical difficulties which would be avoided in future, been effective in: reducing absenteeism for participants; boosting self-confidence and improving self-image; modelling behavioural change; providing a time and space to discuss personal issues with teachers and thereby providing more of a connection to school; improving interpersonal relationships between students and teachers and with each other; and generally increasing happiness. One particularly 'telling' piece of evidence in this regard actually came from the girls who noted, in response to a question about the boys' behaviour, that the boys were now 'paying better attention to the explanations of activities, concentrating better on set tasks, and (are) easier to work with'.



Personal development programmes for boys

'You always have something to aim for.'

A number of schools identified that self-esteem is a fragile commodity for some boys, requiring nurturing through the development of supportive as well as challenging classroom environments that enhance student engagement at school. These schools are using a range of personal development strategies to assist boys to break the bonds of stereotypical masculine cultures and behaviours such as the development of emotional intelligence to build more caring, confident and resilient young people. The well-known *Rock and Water* programme was particularly popular in this regard.

Whitford Catholic Primary School instituted a dance class programme for boys as part of its broader efforts to consider 'whether being male was affecting academic achievement, and if so why? Was there a difficulty for boys to identify as males if they behaved differently to peers: had male identity become unrecognisable? Was our curriculum providing opportunities for males to learn in an environment that nurtured their self-esteem?'

Drawing on evidence that suggests that boys 'need to express emotion and that they benefit from a single-gender learning environment', as well as a belief that 'boys convert feelings to movement and that movement can rekindle feelings', the school set out to establish an environment and avenue for expression where 'boys are given the opportunity to satisfy these needs without fear of being labelled with terms that compromise their masculinity'. The *Boys in Dance* programme was the school's vehicle for achieving this while also giving them a healthy recreational outlet.

The programme, delivered to boys in single-sex settings, comprised a timetabled 30-minute weekly dance lesson for each class from kindergarten to Year 7 for 20 weeks; while girls engaged in other social interaction programmes such as visiting a nearby retirement home. A dance teacher was employed and given guidelines for lesson content that included warm-ups and stretching exercises as well as developing specific dance skills. Boys were introduced to the programme by learning short sequences of movement to various different types of music, including current trends such as break dancing and rap, and thereby experienced 'a wide range of movements from various cultural and historic backgrounds'. The programme also included a guest speaker from a martial arts academy to show boys relevant techniques and serve as a positive role model for developing self-discipline.

Performance was an important component of the programme, giving boys 'a reason for producing a high standard of work', recognising their potential in positive ways, and satisfying their need for attention. By developing skills in dance that they can exhibit in a confident way, it is hoped by the school that this will flow on into improved participation and motivation at school, and hence achievement in the academic domain.

Surveys of samples of students involved reveal that 'aspects of dance ... were well accepted and positively received by male students; that creating a boys-only hands-on learning environment ... was enjoyed by boys in junior and middle primary classes in particular; and that this project endorsed (the fact) that boys need to enjoy converting their feelings into movement'. Probably the main adjustments the school feels it needs to make as the programme moves forward is to formally link what has been found to the classroom environment, perhaps by taking it into account when selecting literacy texts for boys, and seeking to engage a male dance teacher as a dancer in residence and positive role model in 2004.

Behaviour management programmes

Managing challenging behaviours

'He has changed the way he reacts and talks to me. He is a much happier boy, he smiles a lot more and he is much happier about being at school.'

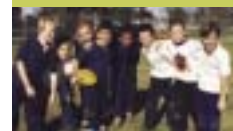
Schools in this category worked below the surface of merely fixing up 'bad boys' and sought to understand the impact of such factors as peer pressure and masculine sub-cultures, and provide strategies to generate more positive attitudes to school. This often involved gathering data on student attitudes towards school and schooling, and the subsequent development of strategies to help students to experience success, such as the development of a language for more effective interpersonal communication or challenging negative thinking among boys.

While not having sought to focus on boys in their own right, Isabella Plains Primary School found that its efforts to cater for the needs of all students as individuals, and broaden its social skills programme for all grades with an alternative play programme in the yard, inevitably dealt primarily with boys.

Since 2002, the school has run a social skills programme whereby all teachers coordinate a K-6 multi-age group, with a student-teacher ratio of 1:17, for weekly sessions that involve the set format of: an icebreaker activity; explicit teaching of a previously negotiated social skill; an activity that provides an opportunity to rehearse the skill based on cooperative learning; and reflection to the students about positive examples of social skills noted during the activity. Every group and hence each student is taught exactly the same lesson across the school at the

same time and teachers work together to ensure consistency of approach and feedback across the school. The only change that has occurred of late to the programme (which includes the awarding of tickets for school raffles to students who demonstrate appropriate skills with the winner recognised for their positive play) is to shift the sessions from Friday afternoon to Monday morning so the progress of the targeted skill can be monitored through the week.

More recently the school has instituted an *Alternative Play* programme for students 'having difficulty with their social skills in the playground'. The programme involves coordination of a small group of no more than 20 students (both those experiencing the difficulties noted but also students who are successful with the skills so there is modelling of



good behaviour) in structured and scaffolded play sessions where there is 'a great deal of teacher talk ... (the) teacher articulates the successful strategies that are being used ... (and encourages) the students with difficulty to reflect on these positive models.' As students exit the sessions, they are provided with a Playground Passport, which outlines 'the goal for the student during their play session, which areas of the playground they are able to enjoy, and requires teacher signatures so that the student is encouraged to come back to the supervising teacher for feedback on how they have managed their goal'.

The combined social skills and alternative play approach already is seeing improvements in playground behaviour from boys, who make up 80–90 per cent of the alternative play sessions. The school has moved from having 6–8 playground slips passed to the executive for follow-up each day, to an average of 0–2, and teachers have noted that 'the language of students as they work in cooperative teams is incorporating the strategies explicitly taught during the social skills sessions'.

Perhaps the only real shortcoming, which the school intends to address as the whole approach proceeds into next year, is the failure to adequately engage parents to ensure consistency of approach at home and at school. While regular reporting has occurred, newsletters often are not read, and a range of different strategies to address this is under consideration.

Peer mediation and peer support

'It has helped me because people have kind of stopped it and that is better.'

'It helped me with reading, writing and maths and just built up my confidence a bit and helped me with my skills.'

Much already is known about the implementation of peer mediation and support programmes in schools, which was documented in relation to boys in particular by schools in this category of the programme. One particularly interesting feature of school and cluster activity in this regard was involving secondary students in mentoring and supporting primary students or younger students in their own school; with consequent advantages for both the supporter and the student in receipt of support, as well as the transition process from primary to secondary school.

The Riverside High School Cluster (which involved one high school and two primary schools) recognised that, although it was identifying boys at risk in the primary years, it had no real programme in place targeted to meet their needs; especially one that builds on research findings that many boys respond to practical and real life challenges, and that acknowledges the fact that many of 'our targeted boys' lack a significant relationship with an older male. Thus, the cluster established a mentor programme involving older secondary students aimed at increasing the attendance, motivation and engagement of the targeted primary group and reducing poor behaviours they exhibited.

After an orientation day for all participants, primary students were integrated into regular secondary classroom programmes with their mentors on a weekly basis in the areas of science, cooking, physical education, computing, electronics, soccer, music and drama. These were all, deliberately, practical areas of the curriculum to reflect the cluster schools' awareness that 'many boys respond to practical and real life challenges and ... in the mainstream classrooms this was not as evident as we believed was necessary to make a difference in the boys identified'. This core project activity was supplemented by a reciprocal interschool visit where the secondary mentors were invited into the primary boys' classrooms, and a final celebration day where certificates of achievement and participation were presented to all participants.



Pre- and post-activity surveys undertaken by the cluster schools showed 'a significant increase in the number of students who identified that they were enjoying school ... a strong swing from not really enjoying group work to a unanimous enjoyment of working with other students on tasks ... (and) a strong shift to accepting and wanting assistance in class'. Primary students involved typically observed that, as two of them stated, 'it helped me with reading, writing and maths' and 'just built up my confidence a bit and helped me with my skills'. From the other side of the activity, mentors commonly referred to the fact that 'it was fun helping a little kid' and 'we'll miss them'.

Beyond this, teachers observed that the primary school boys 'arrived back in their normal classes settled and ready for work ... (and) the older boys had fun with the younger students and vice-versa ... (and) one primary school boy cried when he had to leave his mentor and return to primary school'.

In this context, the actual selection of the senior mentor proved very important (and in future 'a more rigorous process could be put into place'), especially when they were challenged by the fact that the primary boy 'didn't cooperate or behave as expected'; requiring them to put in place strategies to help solve the problem.



Overall, though, the cluster schools are convinced that 'mentoring is a successful tool to engage and excite primary school children to learn ... (and) leads to feelings of success and raised self-esteem for all involved'. The Riverside Cluster already is discussing 'the possibility and viability of a programme that is strongly embedded into the curriculum in 2004'.

Positive role models for students

Community-based projects using male mentors

'He got me on task and he is not afraid of talking about his experience as a young man. I learned lots of things about growing up and the paths you can take and what happens when you take the wrong path.'

Many of the schools and clusters selected for the programme specifically referred in their submissions to the need for male role models, and projects in this category directly sought to develop effective school–community links to address this. In particular, efforts were made to link students to community mentors so they can develop a better understanding of how the community perceives success, and identify clear personal goals and aspirations along with an understanding of how schools can support these. In addition, a number of literacy programmes in schools included role modelling by fathers and other adult males as a key element for developing positive attitudes towards the acquisition of literacy skills.

The *Ten Good Men* project at Kormilda College was an attempt to help boys re-evaluate their roles, beliefs and values in the context of a connection with positive male role models from the Darwin community. To achieve this, the school advertised within its community for potential male participants and received 35 nominations. Ten were selected on the basis of such criteria as their ability to communicate, potential to maintain discipline, availability, and capacity to respond honestly to questions about 'trials, tribulations and benchmarks of their journey through manhood'. Support was then gained from the men's employers where relevant, and participants briefed to inform them of their role, prepare them for what they were about to experience, and ensure that they were at ease with the task.

Workshops then were conducted with college students whereby, in a Boys' Day Out, each of the 'ten good men' conducted a workshop for around 20 students in which he outlined his life journey and responded to students' questions. Male staff from the college facilitated the groups and ensured appropriate duty of care was observed. Later in the year, the men returned to address students and staff at a full assembly and, together with the college, organised worksite visits for the boys as part of an ongoing approach to boys' education in the college.

The key success of the project to date, from the college's perspective, is to have opened up levels of discussion for all stakeholders, but especially the boys and men involved. Key areas of discussion to emerge included the relevance of school, stereotypes and issues related to academic achievement and success, classroom climate and teacher attitudes, and life beyond school. Of particular value to many boys was the increased relevance they saw for their schooling after they heard from the men. One 14 year old boy, for example, who had stated prior to the programme that 'perhaps if the curriculum was more relevant, less academic and more skill-based we may be able to stick with it', observed afterwards that it 'was fun. I liked the stories they told. I think I'd like to run my own business. Do you think I'd need to finish Year 12, yeah I probably would'. This was similar to the views of another 15 year old who pointed to the fact that 'we got to talk to real fellas who had been through what we're going through right now. They know what it's all about'.

The boys particularly responded to the approachability of the men; the message from the boys that came across 'loud and clear' to the college was that 'they want their teachers to be more humane and approachable – not far-off authority figures'. And in that sense, the whole programme was seen as 'planting a seed for future long-term advantage', especially since the students indicated that what they learned from the programme and the men included 'self-respect, discipline, control, responsibility and loyalty, stay in school, tolerance, that everyone is good at something'. Above all, around two-thirds of the boys involved said that 'the men had taught them values and life skills'. Through the *Ten Good Men* project the boys were, the college concluded, 'encouraged to recognise and express emotions and behaviours that are generally hidden from public view and to take off their masks of masculinity. Further projects of a similar nature will be encouraged so that boys are challenged to modify traditional stereotyped patterns of behaviour in order to build relationships that do not require them to resort to rigid, masculine role models'.

WHAT next?

It is clear from the preceding discussion, and the full report *Meeting the Challenge: Guiding Principles for Success from the Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme, Stage One, 2003*, that Stage One of the *Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools Programme* has established an understanding of good practices in action in schools and classrooms across Australia. What is more, the evidence suggests that there is a high degree of congruence between the accepted body of knowledge about successful practices in educating boys from recent reports and research, and what teachers themselves see as worth doing to help boys learn.

Stage Two of the programme will now take this to another level by funding self-directed, cluster-based innovation and professional learning that builds on the lessons of Stage One and clearly links to a common set of guiding principles for improving the learning engagement and outcomes of boys. This will involve the identification of lighthouse schools that will provide practical assistance and professional development to teachers in an associated cluster of schools.

Regardless of whether or not schools choose to participate in this national programme, they would be wise to heed the advice provided by Salisbury High School on how best to move forward in relation to educating boys in the short, medium and long term. From their experience to date, they recommend that:

- schools form boys' education project teams to guide the implementation of changes that will improve outcomes for boys – 'it has been an excellent way to keep boys on the agenda and raise whole school awareness';
- schools collect data that give indications of the problems and issues that need to be addressed – 'surveys of staff and students, student assessment results, attendance figures and behaviour management statistics provide data that paint a very clear picture for teachers';
- change must occur in the classroom – 'unless there is change in relationships, methodology and structures then boys will not be as successful as they could be ... (and) key aspects to address are explicit instruction, support with personal organisation, flexible assessment and authentic learning';
- schools should have value-added programmes that address the emotional needs of boys within a physically active context; and
- boys' education should be a school priority and be an integral part of a school's documented strategic plan.

It is advice that is consistent with the guiding principles that are outlined, and which any school and cluster can readily implement.





PROJECT SCHOOLS: BOYS' EDUCATION LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME (STAGE ONE)

Single schools (alphabetical)

Acton Primary School, Tas
Batchelor Area School, NT
Beechworth Primary School, Vic
Berri Primary School, SA
Braitling Primary School, NT
Bridgewater Primary School, Tas
Camberwell Grammar Junior School, Vic
Cardiff South Public School, NSW
Catholic College Bendigo, Vic
Carwatha P-12 College, Vic
Collector Public School, NSW
Cowandilla Primary School, SA
Crafers Primary School, SA
Curramulka Primary School, SA
Dana Street Primary School, Vic
Debney Park Secondary College, Vic
Drouin Secondary College, Vic
East Maddington Primary School, WA
Elsternwick Primary School, Vic
Ferny Grove State High School, Qld
Glenorchy Primary School, Tas
Gordonvale State High School, Qld
GyMEA Technology High School, NSW
Hampton Primary School, Vic
Homebush Boys' High School, NSW
Inaburra School, NSW
Inverell Public School, NSW
Isabella Plains Primary School, ACT
Jasper Road Public School, NSW
Karingal Heights Primary School, Vic
Kingston Primary School, Tas
Kinross Primary School, WA
Kippa-Ring State School, Qld
Kormilda College, NT
Kuranda State High School, Qld
La Salle Catholic College, NSW
Lakes Creek State School, Qld
Latrobe High School, Tas
Lismore High School, NSW
Lismore Public School, NSW
Mabuiag Island State School, Qld
Macquarie University Special Education Centre, NSW
Mary Immaculate Primary School, NSW
Melaleuca Park K-7 Schools, SA
Moerlina School, WA
Moranbah East State School, Qld
Morwell Park Primary School, Vic
Mount Clear College, Vic
Mt Barker High School, SA
Murray Bridge High School, SA
Murwillumbah High School, NSW
Myrniong Primary School, Vic
Myrrhee Primary School, Vic
Newtown Public School, NSW
North Ainslie Primary School, ACT
Open Access College, SA
Palmerston District Primary School, ACT
Port Lincoln Primary School, SA
Salisbury High School, SA
Sawyers Valley Primary School, WA
Southern Cross Catholic College, Qld
Southwell Primary School, WA
St Clair High School, NSW
St Francis Xavier School, Qld
St George Christian School, NSW
Stromlo High School, ACT
Sunshine Beach State School, Qld
Swinburne Secondary College, Vic
The Toowoomba Preparatory School, Qld
Thornlie Primary School, WA
Thursday Island State School, Qld
Tom Price Senior High School, WA
Tudor House, NSW
Vaucluse Public School, NSW
Wagaman Primary School, NT
Weeden Heights Primary School, Vic
Whitford Catholic Primary School, WA
Winthrop Primary School, WA
Yahl Primary School, SA



Clusters (by State/Territory)

ACT

St Bede's Primary School
Sts Peter and Paul's School
Holy Trinity Primary School

NSW

Oak Flats Public School
Albion Park Rail Public School
Balarang Public School
Oak Flats High School

St John the Apostle School
St Kieran's Primary School
St John the Baptist School
St Cecilia's Primary School
St Mary's Catholic Primary School

St Patrick's Primary School
St Joseph's Primary School
Holy Family Primary School
St James' Primary School
St Pius X High School
St Therese's Primary School
St John's Primary School
St Columba's Primary School

Crawford Public School
Doonside Technology High School

Wamberal Public School
Pretty Beach Public School

Wakefield School
West Wallsend High School
Edgeworth Heights Primary School
Edgeworth Public School
West Wallsend Public School
Barnsley Public School

Qld

Cairns West State School
Trinity Bay State High School
Freshwater State School

Mitchelton Special School²
Grovely State School
Mitchelton State School
Mitchelton State High School

Mirani State School
Marian State School
Mirani State High School

Seven Hills State School
Cannon Hill State School
Morningside State School
Balmoral State High School
Norman Park State School
Bulimba State School
Murarrie State School

Wynnum State High School
Wynnum North State High School

Mother of Good Counsel School
Our Lady Help of Christians Primary
St Mary's College
St Joseph's School
St Augustine's School

St Mary's School
Goondiwindi State School
Goondiwindi State High School

Northview State School
Bucasia State School
Fitzgerald State School
Farleigh State School

El Arish State School
Mission Beach State School
Murray River Upper School
Tully State School
Cardwell State School
Feluga State School
Kennedy State School
Lower Tully State School

² Mitchelton Special School subsequently withdrew from the project because the nature of the hands-on activities chosen were considered to be 'less applicable, unrealistic and unachievable for students with disabilities.'

Gilston State School
Beechmont State School
William Duncan State School
Numinbah Valley State School
Nerang State High School
Worongary State School
Nerang State School

SA

Thorndon Park Primary School
Marryatville Primary School
Trinity Gardens Primary School
Norwood Primary School
East Torrens Primary School
East Marden Primary School
Morphett Vale West School
Reynella South Primary School
O'Sullivan Beach School
Lonsdale Heights Primary School

Tas

Trevallyn Primary School
Riverside High School
Riverside Primary School

Vic

Kismet Park Primary School
Sunbury Heights Primary School
Sunbury West Primary School
Killara Primary School
Doveton Secondary College
Eumemmerring Secondary College – Hallam
Silverton Primary School
Wooranna Park Primary School
Surrey Hills Primary School
Glen Iris Primary School
Camberwell South Primary School
Camberwell High School
Ashburton Primary School
Chatham Primary School
Hartwell Primary School
Seymour East Primary School
Seymour Technical High School
Seymour Special School
Seymour Primary School
Nagambie Primary School

Puckapunyal Primary School
Tallarook Primary School
Avenel Primary School
Port Fairy Consolidated School
Hawkesdale P–12 College
Penshurst Primary School
Koroit and District Primary School
Woolsthorpe Primary School
Caramut Primary School

Hoddles Creek Primary School
Yarra Junction Primary School
Millwarra Primary School
Yellingbo Primary School
Launching Place Primary School
Gladysdale Primary School
Seville Primary School
Warburton Primary School
Woori Yallock Primary School
Don Valley Primary School
Wesburn Primary School
Upper Yarra Secondary College

WA

Augusta Primary School
Margaret River Montessori School
Nyindamurra Family School
Margaret River Senior High School
Karridale Primary School
St Thomas More Primary School
Cowaramup Primary School
Margaret River Primary School
Riverside Primary School
Riverside Education Support Centre
Merredin Senior High School
Melville Senior High School
Greenwood Senior High School
Glengarry Primary School
Carine Senior High School
Blackmore Primary School
Cottesloe Primary School
Warwick Senior High School
East Hamersley Primary School
Balcatta Senior High School