

**Recommendation 1**

By Ian Lillico

**“Both at home and at school, women must be in positions of power –** they must not be seen as the nurturers and men as the power brokers. Both men and women must play a role in their sons’ lives. The father (or male teacher) must not be seen as the disciplinarian as this tends to further emphasize gender stereotypes”

Australian women are, generally, the ones that take on communication with their son’s school and work very hard to support them at home. They must ensure that Dad also takes an equal role on the telephone and at school visits and assemblies. If we allow men to be used as disciplinarians when they come home this further reinforces the gender stereotypical role we are trying to change.

Men must not assume that sons need them to chastise them and should consciously use their partners in this process as well. In schools, male teachers must sometimes send miscreant boys to women teachers to be chastised as they often don’t use power techniques to do so and can diffuse tense situations well. Boys in Primary schools are often, subtly given the impression that women nurture and men dominate as they are sent to them for misbehaviour – this is further exacerbated as many Primary school teachers are female and many Primary school administrators are male.

As we try to get boys to choose teaching as a career and address the imbalance, we need to be mindful that, as they are seeking which careers suit them, constant reminders that male teachers tell you off ensure that this career path is not followed. We need this generation of boys to choose teaching to assist the current imbalance of males in the teaching force and we need them to be caring and nurturing teachers of children.

Some states have taken affirmative action to have male and female Deputies. This not only helps girls aspire to leadership positions but lets boys see women in administrative positions as well and is equally as valuable for them. Boys-only schools have seen the need to include a substantial number of women on their staff compared to many years ago and this has helped balance boys’ perceptions of females in roles of authority.

Some Dads and male teachers have taken on bullying roles for their sons and male students. We need to ensure that this reverses as soon as possible. Boys see many media role model men as tough, uncaring and ruthless. They must also see at home and school that men are also kind, loving, caring and gentle – otherwise the media stereotypes dictate to boys that these ways of acting as a man are not appropriate. We all need to assist in helping boys develop into caring, fine gentlemen.