

## **Boys must connect with nature**

By Ian Lillico



Boys (and girls) must keep connected with nature in order to grow up into healthy adults. Over the last twenty years we have seen an increasing number of young people taking nature for granted. One symptom of this disregard for nature is the increase in vandalism, arson and graffiti. When boys and girls enjoy the simple pastimes of fishing, crabbing, camping, bushwalking etc they are very likely to grow up into well-adjusted adults.

I am sure we can remember the times in our childhood when we went on family holidays near a river or ocean and had fun fishing, camping etc. Those family times are now becoming obsolete as many families head to resorts and more luxurious holidays where the children are often passing their time in spas, pools, on the internet and watching in-house videos. Parents certainly deserve their luxurious breaks, but we need to think of our children who are often divorced from the fantastic nature all around us in Australia.

Boys need to develop their hunter-gatherer instinct and they can't do that from the inside of a hotel room. They need to understand that nature is their teacher - it was there long before they existed and will be there long after they are gone. They need to understand and feel the thrill of providing a meal for the family table and grow emotionally and spiritually when they return from a fishing trip with their catch or a feed of crabs for the family to enjoy.

This basic need for our boys to provide for the family stems from the hunter-gatherer instinct within all boys and girls - but for boys it is even more essential for them to understand that without a lot of money etc they can do something which is providing a meal for the family even though they might be suffering hardship in terms of unemployment etc. The hunter-gatherer instinct, when utilised as a young boy, helps our boys develop into young men who can pass on those natural pastimes to their children and help them to become adjusted to being a provider; even in our modern society.

When boys go from being totally unskilled to skilled in terms of catching, handling, cleaning and cooking crabs or fish, they develop confidence in themselves and don't feel useless when times get tough. I ask parents to think twice when it comes to outings and endeavour to get sand between our boys' toes to keep humanity alive.

