

**Teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers and school  
experiences on their understanding of masculinity.**

Submitted by

John Robert Lee

BA (UNSW) DipEd (UNSW) GradDipReligiousStudies (CCES) MEd(Religion) (CCES)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Religious Education

Faculty of Education

Australian Catholic University  
Research Services  
Locked Bag 4115  
Fitzroy Victoria 3065  
Australia

January, 2003

## **Statement of Authorship and Sources**

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committees.

John R. Lee

## **Abstract**

There is widespread interest shown in the education of boys in school as evidenced in research, education initiatives and discussion in the general community. Research undertaken by Connell (1989, 1995, 1996, 2000), Laberge and Albert (1999), Mac an Ghail (1994), Martino (1998), West (1999, 2002) and others suggests that there is a range of masculinities displayed by teenage boys. Some of the masculinities with which boys identify are in conflict with accepted ideas of educational achievement. This doctoral study investigates the contribution of teachers and school experiences to teenage boys' understanding of masculinity. There are two components to the study. The first part is a systematic review of the literature to highlight findings about boys' perceptions of relationships between masculinity and schooling. The second part is a qualitative empirical study of the views of a sample of Year 11 high school boys in two single sex Catholic schools. The interviews focus on their understandings of masculinity and their perceptions of influential aspects of school life. It includes an analysis of the boys' views of the impact of teachers, sport, discipline and classroom experiences.

Participants in the study indicated that masculinity is changing and the community is requiring men to be more expressive of emotions. The majority of teenage boys interviewed stated that teachers and school experiences influenced their understanding of masculinity. Pupil - teacher relationships, conversations, exhortations and non-verbal communications are all perceived as means by which teachers influence students. Some teachers were regarded as good role models, making a positive contribution to the boys' masculinity. Interviewees reported that the schools promoted two masculinities, 'sporting' and 'academic'. They spoke of contrasting interpretations of the appropriate expression of emotion. One finding of the study is that some of the teenage boys experienced a 'spirituality of connected masculinity' through singing, cheering and participation in school activities including sport, liturgies and retreats.

Implications are drawn from the study and recommendations are made for improving the education of boys including how schools can encourage a diversity of 'reflective' masculinities rather than reinforcing 'hegemonic' understandings of masculinity.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank:

- My family and in particular my wife Elizabeth. The completion of a doctoral research study would have been impossible without the generous support of Elizabeth and our children Julia, Maria and Michael. The sacrifices made by my parents Billie and Kevin Lee in support of my schooling has been foundational and I thank my mother for assistance with this study.
- Principal Supervisor Professor Graham Rossiter and Co-supervisor Associate Professor Paul Chesterton. They operated as a highly effective team providing wise input, unceasing support and timely advice at every stage of the study.
- Dr Ross Keane who served as Co-supervisor in the initial year of the study. His insightful contribution at the outset has had lasting benefits.
- Academic staff and student colleagues in the EdD program at Australian Catholic University. The colloquium program provided valuable opportunities for learning, collaboration and support.
- Library staff at Australian Catholic University, Mount St Mary Campus.
- The College Foundation of my school and The Independent Education Union of NSW for providing some assistance with expenses.
- Students who participated in interviews. My thanks to them for their openness and involvement.
- Principals and teachers who enabled student interviews to take place.

Statement of Authorship and Sources	
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Table of Contents	
List of Tables	
Main text of the thesis	
Appendices	
Bibliography	

## Table of Contents

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

1.1	Background .....	1
1.2	Purpose of the study .....	2
1.3	Methodology .....	2
1.4	Definition of terms .....	3
1.5	Organisation of the thesis .....	4

### Chapter 2

#### Literature on Masculinity, Schooling and Teenage Boys

2.1	Introduction .....	5
2.2	Masculinity or Masculinities, and Teenage Boys .....	6
	2.2.1 Defining masculinity .....	6
	2.2.2 Implications of definitions of masculinity for research with teenage boys .....	13
2.3	Influences on Teenage Boys' Understanding of Masculinity .....	15
2.4	Teenage Boys, Masculinity and Schooling .....	19
	2.4.1 Overview of research on Teenage Boys and Schooling .....	19
	2.4.2 Studies of Teenage Boys, Masculinity and Schooling .....	20
	2.4.3 School as agent in the making of masculinities .....	21
	2.4.4 Addressing the education of boys .....	23
	2.4.5 Reporting boys' views on masculinity .....	25
	2.4.6 Need for institutional changes .....	27
	2.4.7 Need for more research .....	27

2.5	Teachers, School Experiences and Masculinity .....	29
2.5.1	Teachers .....	30
2.5.2	Sport .....	35
2.5.3	Subjects .....	41
2.5.4	Discipline .....	43
2.5.5	Spirituality and Religion .....	44
2.6	Summary .....	45

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

3.1	Introduction .....	46
3.2	Research Design .....	46
3.2.1	Literature Review and Qualitative Investigation .....	46
3.2.2	Research Design of the Qualitative Investigation .....	46
3.2.3	Justification of Research Design .....	48
3.3	Data Collection .....	51
3.3.1	Pilot and main phases of the study .....	51
3.3.2	Schools and students in the study .....	53
3.3.3	Standardised Open-ended Interviews .....	55
3.3.4	Interview Schedule .....	55
3.3.5	Conduct of Interviews .....	56
3.3.6	Individual Interviews and Group Interviews .....	57
3.3.7	Recording Interview Data .....	58
3.3.8	Ethical Considerations .....	58
3.4	Data Analysis .....	59
3.5	Validity .....	60
3.6	Reliability .....	62
3.7	Summary .....	62

## **Chapter 4**

### **Teenage Boys' Perceptions of Masculinity**

4.1	Introduction .....	63
4.2	Perceptions of being a man today .....	63

4.2.1	Today's Men: Independent, Responsible and Traditional .....	64
4.2.2	Men are Changing .....	65
4.3	Perceptions of Masculinity .....	68
4.4	Perceptions of types of masculinity .....	70
4.5	Perceptions of Influences on Understanding of Masculinity .....	73
4.6	Discussion of teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity .....	80
4.6.1	Being a man today .....	80
4.6.2	Understanding masculinity .....	83
4.6.3	Expressing emotions .....	84
4.6.4	Multiple masculinities .....	87
4.6.5	Influencing masculinity .....	88
4.7	Summary .....	89

## **Chapter 5**

### **Teenage Boys' Perceptions of the Influence of Teachers on their Understanding of Masculinity**

5.1	Introduction .....	90
5.2	Perceptions of the influence of teachers on students' understanding of masculinity .....	90
5.2.1	Teenage boys' recollections of teachers and masculine identity ...	90
5.2.2	Teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers' on their understanding of masculinity .....	93
5.3	Perceptions of teacher messages about masculinity .....	96
5.3.1	Teenage boys' awareness of their teachers' views on masculinity	96
5.3.2	Teenage boys' perceptions of how their teachers' views are communicated .....	99
5.3.3	Teenage boys' perceptions of their teachers' views on the best forms of masculinity .....	101
5.4	Role models in school .....	104
5.5	Discussion .....	109
5.5.1	Teachers enhance teenage boys' understanding of masculinity ...	109
5.5.2	Teacher action and masculinity .....	112
5.5.3	Teacher talk and masculinity .....	113

5.5.4	Esteemed teachers and masculinity .....	115
5.6	Summary .....	116

## **Chapter 6**

### **Teenage Boys' Perceptions of the Influence of School Experiences on their Understanding of Masculinity**

6.1	Introduction .....	118
6.2	Perceptions of the influence of school experiences .....	118
6.3	Perceptions of the understanding of masculinity promoted by the school.	123
6.4	Perceptions of the influence of school culture or spirit on their understanding of masculinity .....	127
6.5	Perceptions of the influence of features of school life .....	131
6.5.1	Sport .....	131
6.5.2	Discipline and Pastoral Care .....	135
6.5.3	School Subjects .....	137
6.5.4	Religious Events like Masses and Retreats .....	139
6.6	Participants' satisfaction with the ways masculinity is portrayed in their school .....	142
6.7	Participants' views on the choice of this school for their sons .....	143
6.8	Discussion of teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity .....	144
6.8.1	Culture of masculinity within two Catholic boys' schools .....	144
6.8.2	Dividing sporting and academic masculinities .....	146
6.8.3	Spirituality of connected masculinity .....	149
6.9	Summary .....	151

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion: Findings and Recommendations**

7.1	Introduction .....	153
7.2	Findings .....	153
7.2.1	Objective 1: Analyse the literature on masculinity related to schooling and teenage boys .....	153



7.2.2	Objective 2: Investigate teenage boys’ understanding of masculinity .....	155
7.2.3	Objective 3: investigate teenage boys’ perceptions of the influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity .....	157
7.2.4	Objective 4: interpret the research findings and identify implications for the education of teenage boys .....	159
7.3	Strengths of the study and contributions to research .....	165
7.4	Recommendations for further research .....	166

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1	ACU Ethics Clearance for a Research Project – Approval Form	169
Appendix 2	Information Letter to Participants	170
Appendix 3	Informed Consent Form	171
Appendix 4	Interview Schedule	172

<b>Bibliography</b>		175
---------------------	--	-----

## **List of Tables**

Table 2.1	Criteria for the selection of research literature reviewed .....	5
Table 2.2	Structure of the review of literature .....	6
Table 2.3	Researcher’s Summary of ideas presented in Edley and Wetherell (1995, 1996) .....	8
Table 2.4	Styles of Masculinity proposed by Connell (1995: 77-81) .....	9
Table 2.5	Researcher’s Summary of difficulties with the concept of Hegemonic Masculinity reported by Phoenix and Frosh (2001: 27-28) .....	10
Table 2.6	Researcher’s summary of Lingard and Douglas (1999: 4-7) Two political dimensions of the masculinity literature: pro-feminist and mythopoetic essentialist masculinity .....	11
Table 2.7	Summary of Hearn’s (1996: 214) proposed way of moving beyond the concept of masculinity .....	12
Table 2.8	Key themes in current thinking on masculinity as summarised by Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 7) .....	13
Table 2.9	Selected Research on Boys and Education arranged according to theme	20
Table 2.10	Themes used for reviewing the literature on Teenage Boys, Masculinity and Schooling .....	20
Table 2.11	Why schools should decide to work with boys as a matter of importance. Arguments proposed by Salisbury and Jackson (1993: 3) .	24
Table 2.12	Themes used for reviewing the literature on Teachers, School Experiences and Masculinity .....	30

Table 2.13	Researcher's summary of Connell (1996: 229-230) on the role of teachers in changing masculinity .....	30
Table 2.14	Researcher's summary of Slade and Trent (2000: 218) Characteristics of Good Teachers .....	31
Table 2.15	Researcher's summary of Angus (1993: 83-87) on the contribution of teachers to the gender regime of a Christian Brothers' College .....	33
Table 2.16	Researcher's summary of Askew and Ross (1988) as reported by Bailey (1996) on four key dimensions to the experience of women teachers in a boys' school .....	34
Table 2.17	Researcher's summary of Dutton's (1995: 395-396) proposed reasons for contemporary interest in images of highly muscular male bodies ....	36
Table 2.18	Researcher's summary of Fitzclarence and Hickey (2000: 80). Recommendations on how to change attitudes with junior aged footballers .....	38
Table 2.19	Summary of Pollack (1998) Why sport is transformational for boys ....	39
Table 2.20	Summary of Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 209-215) Alternative school sporting experiences for boys .....	40
Table 2.21	Self-worth Protection Strategies proposed by Jackson (2002: 42-47) ...	41
Table 2.22	Researcher's summary of Connell (1996: 217) Discipline, vortex of masculinity .....	43
Table 3.1	Summary of Research Design: Qualitative Investigation .....	48
Table 3.2	Summary of Data Collection Information .....	53
Table 3.3	Schedule of Interview Questions .....	56
Table 3.4	Ethical procedures in place during the conduct of the study	59
Table 3.5	Maykut & Morehouse (1994: 135) Constant Comparative Method of Data Analysis .....	60
Table 3.6	Steps taken to safeguard Reliability .....	62
Table 4.1	Responses to Question 12. What does it mean to be a man today? .....	63
Table 4.2	Responses to Question 13. What does masculinity mean to you? .....	68
Table 4.3	Responses to Question 14. Are there different types of masculinity? ...	71
Table 4.4	Responses to Question 15. What has influenced your understanding of masculinity? .....	74
Table 4.5	Summary of perceived influences as nominated by participants in answer to Question 15 that relate to family .....	75
Table 4.6	Perceptions of men and change emerging from participants' responses .	80
Table 4.7	Comparison of perspectives on masculinity between the responses of the participants and Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996) .....	84
Table 5.1	Responses to Question 2. Have your teachers influenced your understanding of masculinity? .....	93
Table 5.2	Responses to Question 3. Do the teachers' messages about masculinity come across to you? .....	96
Table 5.3	Responses to Question 4. Do the teachers' views on masculinity come across to you via subtle or explicit ways? .....	99
Table 5.4	Responses to Question 5. Have your teachers said or done anything which gives the impression that one form of masculinity is best? .....	102
Table 5.5	Responses to Question 16. Is there any adult in the school who is a good role model for you? .....	104
Table 5.6	Participants' descriptions of Mr Carter, role model .....	105
Table 6.1	Responses to Question 6. Has this school influenced your understanding of masculinity? .....	118
Table 6.2	Responses to Question 7. Does this school promote one particular	

	understanding of masculinity? .....	123
Table 6.3	Responses to Question 8. Does the culture or spirit of this school influence your understanding of masculinity? .....	127
Table 6.4	Responses to Question 9a: influence of sport .....	131
Table 6.5	Responses to Question 9b: influence of discipline and pastoral care .....	135
Table 6.6	Responses to Question 9c: influence of school subjects .....	137
Table 6.7	Responses to Question 9d: influence of religious events like Masses and Retreats .....	139
Table 6.8	Responses to Question 10: Are you satisfied with the ways that masculinity is portrayed in your school? .....	142
Table 6.9	Responses to Question 11: If you had a son, would you send him to this school? .....	144
Table 6.10	Perceptions of the culture of masculinity in the two Catholic boys' schools emerging from participants' responses .....	145
Table 6.11	Perceptions of achievement associated with sporting and academic masculinities emerging from participants' responses .....	147
Table 6.12	Dimensions and Features of a Spirituality of Connected Masculinity ...	151
Table 7.1	Aspects of schooling for consideration when reviewing masculinity ....	160
Table 7.2	Examples of possible strategies schools can undertake to enhance inclusive masculinities .....	161
Table 7.3	Some curriculum implications of masculinities research .....	163
Table 7.4	Proposed areas for extending research on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity and schooling .....	168

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

There is unprecedented interest in the education of boys in Australia today. This is evidenced in Parliamentary inquiries (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002; O'Doherty, 1994), in numerous newspaper and magazine articles (e.g. 'Lost Boys' *The Bulletin*, 5 June 2001; 'The Trouble with Boys' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1995) and in books published (Biddulph, 1998; Hawkes, 2001; West, 2002), as well as in research studies and related publications (Connell, 1996; West, 1999). The reasons for this interest are many and contested. One view is that these publications are partly in response to the perception that boys are not achieving at school as well as girls (Connell, 2000). Others propose that the media promotes boys versus girls contests (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998) and that the new focus on boys is a part of a response against feminism (Lingard and Douglas, 1999).

Professional interest in boys' education has not been limited to a study of their academic performance. It has also addressed issues including masculinity (Connell, 1995; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996), participation in school sport (Hickey, Fitzclarence, Matthews, 2000), risk taking behaviour (Mills, 2001) and the contribution of women teachers (Hartman, 1999). Specific studies on aspects of boys' schooling need to be located within this expanding field of educational research.

Prominent researchers such as Connell (1995) and Heward (1988) have identified the need for further research into the contribution of schools to teenage boys' understandings of masculinity. This study responds to that need by examining teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity and of the messages about masculinity that come through their teachers and school experiences.

This is a practically oriented study linked to the professional experience of the researcher. It responds to the need for research to inform personal development education in schools, and in particular, to clarify the potential roles of teachers and school experience in the identity

formation of teenage boys. The researcher is a teacher holding an Executive position of Religious Education Co-ordinator in a large Catholic secondary boys' College. This broad ranging leadership role provides opportunities to influence school policy in relation to the education of boys, especially with respect to the spiritual and moral dimensions of education. This study has grown from a professional need to evaluate the relationship between the students' sense of masculinity and their experience of school. The Doctor of Education course provided an opportunity for linking educational research with professional practice.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

This study has four primary objectives. They are to:

1. Analyse the literature on masculinity related to schooling and teenage boys.
2. Investigate teenage boys' understanding of masculinity.
3. Investigate teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity.
4. Interpret the research findings and identify implications for the education of teenage boys.

## **1.3 Methodology**

This research study had two components. Firstly, an extensive review of the literature on masculinity, teenage boys and schooling, and secondly, an exploratory qualitative investigation of the views of thirty eight senior students through individual and group interviews.

The literature review assessed the findings of research related to the purposes of this study, and located this study within the field of academic research on boys, education and gender. The exploratory qualitative investigation involved the participation of Year 11 students from two single sex Catholic boys' secondary schools. This component of the study researched teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity, and of the influence of teachers and schooling on

their understanding of masculinity. The study did not aim to examine in any detail the impact of important factors such as peer groups, social class, family or cultural background. The research focused specifically on the actual words used by teenage boys to explain their perceptions, it analysed the ideas, images and concepts they were using to explore and make sense of masculinity. Accordingly, an important place was given to verbatim reporting of participants' responses. Interview data was analysed thematically using the constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and used by others including Lincoln and Guba (1985), Maykut & Morehouse (1994). Ethical considerations were addressed including additional measures required because the researcher was a member of staff in one of the schools.

The study integrates findings from both the literature review and the interview data in chapters 4, 5 and 6 during the discussion of the results, and also in chapter 7 when implications for the education of boys are proposed. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in the study.

## **1.4 Definition of terms**

To clarify the purpose of this research three groups of terms within the title of the study are defined.

### 'Teenage boys' perceptions':

They are the stated views and perspectives of Year 11 school boys between the ages of 15 and 18 years as recorded in individual and group interviews.

### 'influence of teachers and school experiences':

The perceived impact of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity as reported by the participants.

### 'their understanding of masculinity':

Teenage boys' concepts of masculinity and their perceptions of the identity of men.

## **1.5 Organisation of the thesis**

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study, outlining the rationale, purpose and scope of the research study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on masculinity, schooling and teenage boys and locates the study within the field of academic literature on gender and boys' education.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design employed and details methodologies used in the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter 4 reports and discusses the data collected on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity.

Chapter 5 reports and discusses the data collected on teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers on their understanding of masculinity.

Chapter 6 reports and discusses the data collected on teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity.

Chapter 7 summarises the findings and discusses implications for the education of teenage boys.

## Chapter 2

# A Review of the Literature on Masculinity, Schooling and Teenage Boys

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on masculinity, schooling and teenage boys. It locates the research reported in the thesis within the expanding academic literature on gender and boys' education. The chapter will highlight prominent themes as well as focus on issues that are pertinent to teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity.

#### Rationale for the selection of literature

There are many interconnected facets of the education of boys that have been the subject of research. Writing in both the academic literature and the popular press has increased at a rapid rate. However, not all research related to the education of boys will be detailed in this review. Some important areas are only noted briefly because they are not central to the aims of this study; examples include: changing government policy on the education of boys and girls; academic achievement and gender; the merits of single sex or co-educational schooling; and attitudes about sexuality. Table 2.1 outlines the criteria used for the selection of research literature reported in this chapter:

Table 2.1 Criteria for the selection of research literature reviewed.
1. Research investigating teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity.
2. Research on teenage boys' experience of schooling and masculinity.
3. Research on the nature and function of masculinity.

#### Structure of Chapter

The literature will be reviewed in the following sequence outlined in Table 2.2.



Table 2.2 Structure of the review of literature.
<p><b>Masculinity or Masculinities, and Teenage Boys (2.2)</b> - definitions of masculinity, concept of multiple masculinities, application of this to teenage boys.</p> <p><b>Influences on Teenage Boys' Understanding of Masculinity (2.3)</b> - contribution of peer group, family, school, individual and other social cultural factors.</p> <p><b>Teenage Boys, Masculinity and Schooling (2.4)</b> - research on school education and masculinity, investigating the perceptions of teenage boys.</p> <p><b>Teachers, School Experiences and Masculinity (2.5)</b> - role of particular aspects of schooling on teenage boys' understandings of masculinity: teachers, sport, school subjects and spirituality.</p>

Chapter 2 concludes with 2.6 Summary and links the literature review component with the aims of the study.

## **2.2 Masculinity or Masculinities, and Teenage Boys**

Academic research within the area of masculinities is at a comparatively early stage. Two prominent themes recur in the literature. First, there are diverse understandings of masculinity. Second, teenage boys are becoming men at a time when there are competing perceptions of masculinity in society. Both themes will be reviewed in this section.

### **2.2.1 Defining masculinity**

The terms masculinity and masculinities have been used within the academic literature over the past three decades. Different tracks have been taken in masculinity research, as exemplified in the six perspectives on this research noted in Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996). 'Hegemonic masculinity', 'multiple masculinities', and the 'psychological and political dimensions of masculinity' were found to be particularly relevant to this study.

#### **Masculinity as a field of research**

Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) reviewed the sociology of gender and changing understandings of masculinity. Their findings were that feminism, 'men's liberation' and gay activism had contributed to the development of research on masculinity. The major

recommendation of Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987: 141) was the need for a sociology of masculinity that is “built on actual social practices rather than discussion of rhetoric”.

Brod and Kaufman (1994) brought together many prominent authors on masculinity to document this emerging area of study. Contributors included: Connell, Hearn, Kimmel, Mac an Ghail, and Messner. According to Brod and Kaufman (1994: 9) the aim of this publication was to:

explore a number of emerging themes, concerns and debates in the critical study of men and masculinities.

Three findings of Brod and Kaufman (1994) made a significant contribution to the emerging literature. First, there was diversity in masculinities both across and within national and cultural boundaries. Second, research must recognise the experience of men who are marginalised. Third, there was a link between scholarship on masculinity and action by men in support of gender equality.

### **Six perspectives on masculinity**

Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996) traced the development of writings on masculinity from the initial responses of men to feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, until expansion of this literature in the 1980s and 1990s. One prominent feature of their publications their grouped understandings of masculinity around six perspectives. Table 2.3 summarises Edley and Wetherell’s classification.

Perspective on Men and Masculinity	Researcher's brief description of perspective including names of researchers that Edley and Wetherell place in this category
Biological	Masculinity as an expression of biological, physical and genetic forces. Goldberg (1973), Hutt (1972)
Psychoanalysis	Masculinity as a product of the emotional life of men. It influences the way they relate to men, women and society. Chowdorow (1989)
Learning the male sex role	Role theory, a combination of psychology and sociology. Masculinity as a set of behaviours men learn to perform. Bem (1987); Pleck (1987)
Masculinity and social relations	Masculinity reflects the way men are positioned within social structures like class and economic production. Tolson (1977); Seidler (1991)
Cultural perspective on men	Masculinity is understood by looking at shared understandings in society and the use of power. Rotundo (1987); Mangan & Walvin (1987)
Feminism and the critique of masculinity	The authors review feminist schools of thinking on masculinity finding that men benefit from power at the expense of women. Walby (1990); Stoltenberg (1990)

Edley and Wetherell's (1995, 1996) typology demonstrated that research on masculinity can be classified along philosophical, political and ideological lines. Pease (2002) reviewed the theoretical basis of masculinity and reported his findings in six strands. They were: socio-biological, psychoanalytic, Jungian, sex role theories, men's social practices and post modern masculinities. The findings of Pease (2002) and Edley and Wetherell (1995, 1996) indicated that it is important to understand the underlying assumptions of different researchers in the field of masculinity. There are two significant characteristics of their research. First, it provides a framework for reporting the contested definitions of masculinity. Second, Edley and Wetherell (1995: 206) concluded: "there is no single, correct theory of masculinity".

### **Hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities**

Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) were the first to use the concept 'hegemonic masculinity'. They applied Gramsci's (1971) understanding of hegemony referring to the social dominance of a group and applied it to an authoritative expression of masculinity. Other

authors named masculinity that emphasises dominance using other terms such as: ‘traditional’ (Christian, 1994) and retributive (Chapman and Rutherford, 1988). However, ‘hegemonic masculinity’ has become the widely used term with this field of research.

Connell (1995, 1996, 2000) has written extensively on hegemonic masculinity. Part of the value of Connell’s research is that it has provided a framework for further understanding masculinity. Connell (1995) emphasised that hegemonic masculinity was dominant, dynamic and had particular expressions within different cultures. He also proposed that hegemonic masculinity is one of multiple forms of masculinity. Table 2.4 reports the constructions proposed by Connell (1995) as the main patterns of masculinity in the current gender order.

Table 2.4 Styles of Masculinity proposed by Connell (1995: 77-81)	
<b>hegemonic masculinity:</b>	embodies the legitimacy of patriarchy, dominance of man and the subordination of women. (exemplars from media, business, military, government, ‘corporate displays of masculinity’)
<b>subordinated masculinity:</b>	dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men by political and cultural exclusion.
<b>complicit masculinity:</b>	masculinities constructed in a way that they are not in the frontline of patriarchy but benefit from the ‘hegemonic dividend’
<b>marginalised masculinity:</b>	interplay of gender, race and class structures that subordinate classes and ethnic groups

### **Hegemonic masculinity: critiques and nuances**

Connell’s definitions and characterisations of masculinities have become a reference point within the literature. Masculinities, not masculinity, has become the preferred term used by writers and researchers in the educational literature. Over the last decade there have been both critical use and evaluation of hegemonic masculinity.

Phoenix and Frosh (2001) provided a considered review of the value of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary research. They proposed that while hegemonic masculinity has been helpful there are some difficulties with the use of the concept. Drawing on an international sample of seven research studies, Phoenix and Frosh (2001) recorded

difficulties researchers have documented with hegemonic masculinity. Table 2.5 summarises their concerns.

Both "macho" and "new" men can be hegemonic	Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1995)
A "clan" of intellectual boys who dominated their Oslo school who were not tough or sporting in the traditional "hegemonic" way	Bjerrum Nielson and Rudberg (1994)
Some working class hegemonic men lack the social power of middle class men who do not have hegemonic characteristics	Edley and Wetherell (1995)
The "cool pose" of African American men is a defensive strategy against racism and lack of power rather than hegemonic	Majors and Billson (1992)
Hegemonic masculine style behaviour can be displayed by women	Kerfoot and Whitehead (1998)
Hegemonic descriptions of masculinity can be applied in a simplistic and dichotomous way that does not assist research	Wetherell and Edley (1999)
The concept is too abstract and unattainable to be useful in research	Wetherell and Edley (1999), Donaldson (1993)

Phoenix and Frosh (2001) found that despite these difficulties, hegemonic masculinity was still employed extensively in research. They reported that very few researchers were no longer finding the concept useful. Wetherell and Edley (1998) and Kerfoot and Whitehead (1998) chose to use other terms to nuance understandings of masculinity. Connell (1995, 1996, 2000) has maintained that masculinities vary from culture to culture, are multilayered, dynamic and collectively produced. In concluding their review and empirical study, Phoenix and Frosh (2001) asserted that a plural understanding of hegemonic masculinity remains a useful concept. There will be a detailed analysis of their qualitative research and findings in section 2.4.2.

### **Contemporary political and psychological perspectives on masculinity**

Tacey (1997) critiqued both feminist and mens' movement perspectives on masculinity. Tacey believed that contemporary understandings of masculinity are still based on an inadequate understanding of both patriarchy and psychology. He proposed that insights

from the psychology of Jung could assist in the development of a masculinity that is more open and responsive to the demands of today. Tacey asserted that masculinity needs to be re-balanced as a self-critical partner with emerging understandings of femininity. Tacey believed that homosexual and marginalised men are best able to lead the development of new post- patriarchal understandings of masculinity.

Lingard and Douglas (1999) described the political dimension to debates about masculinity. They reviewed the diversity of perspectives on masculinity from both main strands: feminism and pro-feminism and recuperative masculinist positions. Lingard and Douglas identified characteristics of the two dominant political perspectives within the masculinity literature. Table 2.6 provides a summary of the two positions.

Table 2.6 Researcher's Summary of Lingard and Douglas (1999: 4-7) Two political dimensions of the masculinity literature: pro-feminist and mythopoetic essentialist masculinity
<p><b>Pro-feminist:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support feminist reform agenda in education</li> <li>● See the need to change men, masculinities and social structures</li> <li>● Recognise the inequalities within the current gender order in society and education</li> <li>● See gender as a relational concept and reject a notion of focusing on boys and turning away from the educational needs of girls</li> <li>● Recognise the negative impact of hegemonic masculinity on some men, boys as well as women</li> </ul> <p><b>Mythopoetic, essentialist masculinity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on injuries and costs of masculinity in a self absorbed and therapeutic way</li> <li>● Gender imbalance in education with girls outperforming boys</li> <li>● Mens' rights stance where men and boys are the new disadvantaged</li> </ul>

Lingard and Douglas (1999) concluded by stating their support for a pro-feminist position. They found that there is potential for a coalition between pro-feminist and some mythopoetic men, if they are able to join the pro-feminists in seeking social justice and gender equity. Both Tacey (1997) and Lingard and Douglas (1999) advocated the need for new approaches to masculinity that are inclusive of men and seek equity for both men and women.

## Limitations of the concept of Masculinity

Another theme within the literature is that the concept of masculinity is so limited that it should not be used. While Phoenix and Frosh (2001) outlined the specific limitations of hegemonic masculinity, others question the value of the broader term masculinity. Hearn (1996) and MacInnes (1998) both provided different perspectives on masculinity and came to some similar conclusions.

MacInnes (1998) provided a critique of the masculinity drawn from Marx and Weber. He proposed that historical, social and economic realities are responsible for the concept of masculinity. Hearn (1996) asserted that the term masculinity is used so widely and with such a lack of precision that it is no longer helpful. He believed the use of the term masculinities is an advance but it does not succeed in resolving the difficulties he outlined in his critique of masculinity. Table 2.7 provides a summary of Hearn's view of a way forward in dealing with masculinity.

Table 2.7 Summary of Hearn's (1996: 214) proposed way of moving beyond the concept of masculinity. This involves four dimensions:
1. Terms masculinity and masculinities need to be used with precision. 2. It is often more helpful to use men rather than masculinity. Use terms like: men's assumptions, beliefs about men, men's social relations. 3. The term masculinities is frequently used. The concept of multiple masculinities needs to be addressed. 4. Develop new concepts to explore critically men's and women's experience of men.

## Summary

The preceding pages reviewed the debates regarding the word masculinity. Both the terms masculinity and masculinities are used extensively within academic writing on gender, education and social theory. Researchers such as Phoenix and Frosh (2001), Connell (2000, 1995) and Brod and Kaufman (1994) have demonstrated the value of the term masculinities. The use of the plural term masculinities is now widespread in this field of literature. Examples of this usage are the *Men and Masculinities Series* by Sage Publications and the leading journal *Masculinities*. While Hearn (1996) and MacInnes (1998) stated dissatisfaction with the use of the terms: masculinity and masculinities, they are in the minority. Hearn (1996) proposed that new concepts be developed instead of masculinity and masculinities. Whilst this may occur in the future, masculinity and masculinities are

used currently to describe aspects of male identity by researchers. However, the term masculinities has limited usage beyond the academic literature.

## **2.2.2 Implications of definitions of masculinity for research with teenage boys**

There is a specialised body of research on teenage boys, schooling and masculinity. Key research studies will be reported in Section 2.4. However, the current sub-section examines the appropriateness of the concept ‘multiple masculinities’ to assist in understanding the experience of teenage boys.

### **Application of multiple masculinities to teenage boys**

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) provided one approach to conceptualising boys’ understandings of masculinities. They drew on the men’s studies literature of the late eighties and first five years of the nineties. Salisbury and Jackson’s summary of key themes in this literature is presented in Table 2.

1.	There is no such thing as masculinity – only masculinities. Lumping all men and boys together does not adequately represent the many varied forms of masculinity.
2.	Masculine identities are always full of cracks and fissures, as they shift across history and different cultures. Masculine identities are never harmoniously integrated or rationally coherent.
3.	Masculine identity is always fragmentary and multi-faceted. Every single man or boy is made up of multiple masculine identities struggling for dominance. There is conflict between the fiction of a ‘real me’ and alternative, more fluid selves.
4.	There is a hierarchy of these varied forms of masculinity. There is always conflict going on between desirable and marginalised masculinities.

Salisbury and Jackson proposed that boys face difficult choices between a range of conflicting masculine identities. Salisbury and Jackson advocated that teachers work with boys to question traditional understandings of being a man. They warned that peer group pressure to gain acceptance can block some boys’ motivations to embrace more positive masculine identities.



## **Research supporting the application of multiple masculinities to teenage boys**

There has been extensive empirical research in the 1990s on teenage boys and multiple masculinities. Connell (1989), Mac an Ghail (1994), Browne (1995), Salisbury and Jackson (1996), West (1996), Laberge and Albert (1999) and Phoenix and Frosh (2001) used the concept of multiple masculinities to interpret the views of teenage boys. Key findings of these studies will be described in section 2.4.2. However, there is a common feature in their findings. Masculinities include a wide range of identities that are broader than one dominant masculinity. Teenage boys are maturing in a society that is characterised by a number of different masculinities. Salisbury and Jackson (1996:7) proposed that individual teenage boys are negotiating multiple masculine identities. However, not all of these masculinities have equal status.

### **Masculinities: dynamic, conflicting and contested**

Connell (1996: 209) claimed that different masculinities “do not sit side-by-side like dishes in a smorgasbord”. There are hierarchies amongst masculinities, some are prized, others are marginalised. Connell (1996) found that masculinities are dynamic, conflicting, contested, layered and actively constructed. Two Australian researchers highlighted the importance of boys having a socially accepted masculinity.

West (1996: 58) supported the view that there are multiple masculinities for both men and boys. West (1996: 58-60) identified the rules by which a boy becomes a man in western countries. He critiqued these rules and proposed the following strategies to enhance identity options for boys. First, boys are told to be ‘tough’, while since the 1960s girls have been told they can be any type of woman they desire. Boys need to be encouraged to grow beyond this traditional masculine pattern. Second, greater varieties of media images of men are needed. There is more to being a man than the stereotyped action hero. Thirdly, glorification of men’s bodies and body building can lead many boys and men into unhappiness with their masculinity.

Browne (1995) conducted research on teenage boys’ developing understandings of masculinities. He undertook group work with high school boys in inner Sydney. Browne (1995) found that adolescent boys believed that they had to live up to a narrow form of

hegemonic masculinity. The boys in his study spoke of difficulty in expressing feelings or being seen as vulnerable young men.

### **Masculinities and this empirical study of teenage boys**

Multiple masculinities has been useful for researchers as a way of conceptualising experiences of boys. This research aims at clarifying the messages teenage boys received about men and masculinity. This will assist in identifying how the boys in the study interpreted masculinity.

The use of masculinities supports a more inclusive understanding of masculine identity than the unitary term masculinity. This research primarily uses the term masculinity. This is done because the single word masculinity has more familiarity beyond specialist researchers in gender and education. This is the reason for using the term masculinity with the teenage boys who participated in the qualitative empirical component of this research.

One of the objectives of the qualitative study is to investigate the meanings and understandings of masculinities held by teenage school boys. Students who participated in this study were asked questions about what masculinity meant to them. At no point were students given a pre-determined definition of masculinity to evaluate.

## **2.3 Influences on Teenage Boys' Understanding of Masculinity**

This section reviews research that investigated the contribution of institutional and personal factors to teenage boys' understanding of masculinity. It is a delimited segment of the literature review. It provides a succinct examination of the involvement of peer group, family and other elements of culture. The school is located as one of many agencies influencing teenage boys and their sense of masculinity.

Connell (1996: 210-211), Lesko (2000: xi-xvii), Lingard and Douglas (1999: 97-99), Gilbert and Gilbert (1998: 3-6), Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 1-2) identified the complex range of factors that influence the development of boys' masculinity. The contribution of each factor will be considered before looking at the role of schooling in detail.

## **Media**

Television, movies, internet, music, computers, electronic games, radio and newspapers are prominent in young people's entertainment experience. The media can inform and influence them through direct and implied messages, both verbal and non verbal. Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 139-156) compiled a summary of studies that highlighted the place of television and other branches of the media in the lives of teenage boys. Three of these studies reported research by Miedzain (1992), Postman (1979) and Craig (1992). Miedzain (1992) found that American boys will have seen about twenty six thousand murders committed on television by the time they turn eighteen. Postman (1979) was one of the first to argue that television represents an unofficial curriculum influencing the values and behaviour of young people. Craig (1992) found that young men were often targeted in advertising campaigns using an appealing combination of sporting, masculine and sexual images. Connell (1996: 211) and West (1999: 34-39) claimed that the media is a significant influence on masculinity. The media exerts this influence in partnership with other commercial enterprises including the sporting industry. There is little doubt that the media has a significant influence on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity, but there is little research on how this is mediated psychologically (Rossiter, 2000). Further research is needed to investigate the impact of the media, and school media education initiatives, on understandings of masculinity.

## **Sport**

Messner (1992) reviewed the relationship between sport and masculinity. His frequently cited work traced the development of modern sport from its origins in English Public Schools to its current role as a social institution in western societies. Messner (1992: 24) proposed that boys' masculinity is judged according to performance in competitive sport. Sabo and Runfola (1980) described how sport acts to promote a negative and violent pattern of masculine behaviour. This is one theme reported by Parker (1996) in his review of sporting masculinities and gender relations. Both Parker (1996) and Messner (1992) described the way that sport has become an institutional influence on the way masculinity is expressed in contemporary society. Watching and participating in sport is an important source of masculine identity according to these researchers. Men and boys are presented with images of success, power and achievement. Hickey, Fitzclarence and Matthews (2000), Connell (2000, 1996) and West (2002, 1999) concluded that sport is a major

influence on teenage boys' understandings of masculinity. There is need for further research on the positive role of sport as an arena where boys can learn personal skills, group identification and social competencies when they are mentored by coaches who understand sport's positive contribution to masculinity.

### **Peer Group**

Research on peer groups as an influence on understandings of masculinity developed as a result of the youth culture studies during the 1970s. Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Willis (1977) marked a transition in research on youth, their studies being amongst the first to be concerned with the masculine identity of teenage boys. Both of these studies focused on the interplay of peer group, class and masculinity. Findings of both studies concluded that peers were an important influence on the aspirations and behaviour of young men. The research of Connell (1989) and Mac an Ghail (1994) reported the active involvement of peers in establishing hierarchies of masculinities within educational settings. Canaan (1996) claimed that peer group, social class and employment contributed to the acceptance of drinking and fighting as a sign of masculinity amongst working class men in northern England. Each of these studies demonstrated that peer groups influence the masculinities adopted by teenage boys and young men. Teachers and school leaders need to recognise the contribution of peer groups to teenage boys' understanding of masculinity so that educators can better respond to the needs of students in their school community.

### **Socio economic and cultural factors**

Masculine behaviour exhibited by men varies from culture to culture. Connell (1993) reviewed images of masculinity across time and culture. He concluded that social, historical, economic and cultural factors all influence the character of dominant and marginalised masculinities. Research by Willis (1977), Mac an Ghail (1994), McKay, Messner and Sabo (2000) reported the importance of social context when interpreting masculinity. Kenway (1997), Lingard and Douglas (1999) and Connell (2000) argued that feminism provided insights into contemporary social concerns about the privileges enjoyed by some men at the expense of women. Feminist and pro-feminist male researchers, as listed above, are critical of initiatives to promote the education of boys unless they are accompanied steps towards greater gender equity and an analysis of male power.

## **Family**

Pease (2002: 51) described the importance of the family as the “first arena in which gender is constructed”. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) reviewed research on family influences and highlighted their importance. They reported the significance of language and gender roles in the home, asserting that mothers and fathers are active influences on teenage boys’ developing understandings of masculinity. Connell (1995: 39) expressed concern that the conservative social groups were attempting to restore models of family that marginalised women. Gurian (1999), Kindlon and Thompson (1999) and Pollack (1998) concluded that family has a significant role. However, there has been an incomplete pattern of research on the influence of the family on teenage boys’ perceptions of masculinity. There is limited published data recording teenage boys’ views. This is an area where more research is needed.

## **School**

School is one institution within a web of agencies influencing masculinity. The role of schooling has been investigated by researchers including: Willis (1977), Heward (1988), Mac an Ghail (1994), Connell (1996), Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), Lingard and Douglas (1999) Lesko (2000), Martino and Meyenn (2001), West (2002). The contribution of school to the development of teenage boys’ understanding of masculinity is reviewed in detail in sections 2.4 and 2.5.

## **Personal factors and individual differences**

Personal factors and individual differences provide another series of influences on teenage boys and their understanding of masculinity. These factors do not exist in isolation from the institutional agencies but they provide another way of reviewing the influences upon masculinity.

The psychological, educational and sociological literature describes processes that contribute to self understanding and identity formation. Monte (1995) described twenty two discrete theories that attempt to explain the characteristics of personality. Grodin and Lindlof (1996) proposed that understandings of the self are influenced by the rapidly changing cultural context. Josselson and Lieblich (1995) argued that narrative approaches to investigation enable researchers to recognise how individuals interpret their personal experience. Rose

(1996) asserted that political movements within psychology influence research on identity formation. While beyond the scope of this particular study, the psychological and sociological dimensions of identity formation are important for showing the personal processes that are at work in shaping identity, including those aspects related to a sense of masculinity.

## **Summary**

Academic research describes a complex set of influences that contributes to teenage boys' understandings of men and masculinity. These include both institutional and individual factors. The processes by which young men develop their identity is thus an important area for research on masculinity. The primary focus of this study is on the contribution of school to teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity.

## **2.4 Teenage Boys, Masculinity and Schooling**

This section reviews research on education and masculinity. Pertinent examples of studies on boys and schooling will be outlined, with special attention given to perceptions of teenage boys.

### **2.4.1 Overview of research on Teenage Boys and Schooling.**

The rise of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s led to a growth in research on the relationship between aspects of education and gender. Over the last two decades, this research has expanded to include a diversity of features of schooling. It is not possible to cover the full extent of this literature in this study. Table 2.9 refers to prominent studies for each selected theme within the research on boys and education. Some themes such as achievement, sexuality and government policies, are not central to the aims of this study, while others such as teachers, sport and discipline are reported in detail. Table 2.9 shows the variety of themes within the field of boys' education that have attracted interest from researchers.

Achievement, Girls and Boys	Teese, R. et al (1995) Kenway, J. (1997) Francis, B. (2000) Noble, C. and Bradford, W. (2000)
Literacy	Moloney, J. (2000) Gilbert, R. and Gilbert, P. (1998)
Sexuality and Gender	Mac an Ghail, M. (1994) Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (1997)
Co-ed vs Single sex	Mahoney, P. (1995)
Governments and education policy	O'Doherty, S. (1994) House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training (2002)
Sport	Lingard, B. and Douglas, P. (1999) Salisbury, J. and Jackson, D. (1996)
Cultures of boys at school	Mac an Ghail, M. (1994)
Discipline	Benyon, J. (1989) Angus, L. (1993)
Religion and Spirituality	Rohr, R. (1998)
Teachers	Slade, M. and Trent, F. (2000) Mac an Ghail, M. (1994)
Boys' Programs	Salisbury, J. and Jackson, D. (1996) Noble, C. and Bradford, W. (2000)
Violence, bullying and harassment	Salisbury, J. and Jackson, D. (1996) Benyon, J. (1989)
Peer groups	Mac an Ghail, M. (1994) Connell, R. (1989), (1996)

### 2.4.2 Studies of Teenage Boys, Masculinity and Schooling

Over the last three or four decades there have been a number of research studies investigating teenage boys, schooling and masculinity. This literature will be reviewed thematically. Table 2.10 summarises the themes used to report prominent research studies.

School as agent in the making of masculinities (2.4.3) Addressing the education of boys (2.4.4) Reporting boys' views on masculinity (2.4.5) Need for institutional change (2.4.6) Need for more research (2.4.7)
---

### **2.4.3 School as agent in the making of masculinities**

#### **Reinforcing alienation, working class masculinities**

Willis (1977) demonstrated how the social class and economic system can alienate British teenage boys in working class schools. Willis (1977: 65) critiqued school as “the agency of face to face control”. Willis believed that the process of schooling reinforced working class images of masculinities. Schools did not assist young men to gain access to a greater range of choices, but locked them into the existing class and gender systems. Willis viewed the teachers, curriculum and discipline processes as agents of social alienation.

Walker (1988) researched the role of the peer group during his investigation of male student culture in an inner city Australian school. The social and cultural patterns of the friendship group provided a framework for viewing school life for young men. Walker showed that the peer group was a major influence on the masculinities of teenage boys and expressed in their orientation to school.

Beynon (1989) studied a large comprehensive boys’ school in South Wales in the mid 1980s. He investigated the induction of eleven and twelve year old boys into the school. Beynon (1989:193-197) surveyed the literature available and restated the view of Willis (1977) that the school is a “gendering agency”. Beynon’s analysis of teacher - student interaction found that a culture of violence was having an influence on the students.

Beynon (1989:197-204) described the climate of violence operating within and between teachers and students. Student perceptions of teacher violence were categorised into: funny violence (pretend fights), ‘real’ violence (boys hurt or at risk), and fair – unfair violence (justifiable acts to keep order). Beynon also recorded acts of violence between students.

The significance of Beynon’s research is its clear description of the role of school violence in promoting one style of masculinity. Teachers and students faced ostracism if they did not conform to the code of actual and symbolic violence. Beynon (1989:210-212) claimed that the established order of the school perpetuated aggressive masculinity.

Nayak and Kehily (2001) studied school boy humour in an English secondary school. They found that humour acts to regulate student masculinities. Students who worked hard at



school received banter and verbal abuse. Nayak and Kehily expressed concern that humour was used to perpetuate 'hard masculinity' that was out dated in contemporary society that demanded better education and interpersonal skills of teenage boys joining the workforce.

### **Promoting masculinities of the elite**

Researchers have reviewed understandings of masculinity in nineteenth century English and American schools. Mangan (1987) critiqued the concept of 'muscular Christianity' in Victorian England and proposed that ideologies current at the time regarding 'Social Darwinism' provide a better framework for interpreting masculinities promoted by elite schools. Springhall (1987) and Rotundo (1987) described ideal images of masculinity promoted in England and America. Each of these three historical studies concluded that cultural and economic forces influenced the way that particular masculinities are promoted in schools and other institutions.

Heward (1988) investigated the institutional role of the school in the social class system of England. Heward's study involved the examination of letters written by parents to the principals of an English public (private) school over a twenty one year period. This study recorded evidence of how an elite school worked with the parents to promote a particular style of masculinity amongst its students.

### **Promoting "responsibility"**

Angus (1993) researched the role of women within the gender and organisational culture of a Catholic boys' school run by the Christian Brothers in a small Australian provincial city. He reported that the school promoted an approved masculinity where the boys were encouraged to be 'responsible young men'. School captains, elected by their peers and staff, exemplified this 'responsible' and 'mature' masculinity. Angus stated that boys voted as school captain possessed considerable sporting ability, academic capacity and were regarded as having good character.

## **Marginalised masculinities**

Mac an Ghail (1994) carried out an ethnographic study in a northern England comprehensive high school, over a three year period from 1990 to 1992. Mac an Ghail desired to examine closely the experience of young men within his school based ethnography. He investigated how a state secondary school regulated and constructed masculinities. Mac an Ghail's (1994: 3) primary concern was to :

explore the processes involved in the interplay between schooling, masculinities and sexualities.

Mac an Ghail (1994) reported the experience of boys in minority groups including black and homosexual students. A finding of this study is that school structures, teacher student interactions and government imposed curriculum all contributed to the alienation of boys with a more marginalised sense of masculinity.

Connell (1996) proposed that there is a choice between multiple masculinities available to growing young men. He suggested that particular school processes act as 'vortices' that masculinize boys. School processes of subjects, sport and discipline are powerful sources of messages to boys about what it means to be a man. There are research opportunities for Connell's 'vortices' to be investigated empirically. This study examined what boys perceive as significant school influences on their understanding of masculinity, and asked questions about each of Connell's 'vortices'.

### **2.4.4 Addressing the education of boys**

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) engaged in research projects and group work that have taken them into schools in the industrialised cities of northern England. They proposed practical educational strategies which took into account their research findings. Salisbury and Jackson (1996) advocated that schools should address the needs of boys as a matter of urgency. They collated insights drawn from feminist educational researchers to support their argument. Some of the arguments cited are listed in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11 Why schools should decide to work with boys as a matter of importance. Arguments proposed by Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 3pp)	
1.	Bullying, harassment and abuse by school boys are seriously damaging to girls and marginalised boys (gay, disabled, asthmatic, effeminate/heterosexual boys, some black boys, etc).
2.	Boys' domination of physical and psychological space in mixed, secondary schools often prevents girls from fully utilising school resources to develop their careers and lives.
3.	Boys' identification with macho values, where school learning is seen as unmanly, often leads to a significant academic underachievement in some groups. Conformity to peer pressure also works against academic success.
4.	Restricted notions of heterosexual manliness often prevents boys taking emotional and sexual responsibility for theirs and others lives.
5.	Institutional sites such as the playing field, playground, changing room, and gym are important places for boys to masculinize their bodies to embody physically superiority.
6.	Traditional models of manliness are destructive to self and others. Traditional models trap boys into limited work choices and damaging social, emotional relationships.

Salisbury and Jackson connected contemporary studies on the educational needs of boys with gender and education research since the re-emergence of British feminism in late 1960s. They highlight reactions by men and boys to gender initiatives across three decades. Salisbury and Jackson cited Connell (1989) in questioning the view that boys are educationally privileged. They criticised the pioneering research of Askew and Ross (1988) because of their reliance on role theory. According to Salisbury and Jackson, Ross and Askew were too accepting that the school is a patriarchal institution and that boys are victims of socialisation.

### **“Boys’ Education” programs**

There are conflicting views expressed in the masculinity and school literature on special initiatives or education programs for boys. Some researchers such as West (2002), Hawkes (2001), Noble and Bradford (2000), Ludowyke (1997), Salisbury and Jackson (1996), Browne and Fletcher (1995) and *The Boys in Schools Bulletin* described strategies to improve educational outcomes for school boys. Other researchers, including Connell (2000), Mills (2000), Lingard and Douglas (1999), and Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), have argued that special programs for boys can be symptomatic of a ‘backlash’ response to feminism and improvements in educational outcomes of girls.

Closer investigation of the literature indicates that there are points of commonality within this contested area. Lingard and Douglas (1999) claimed that insights could be drawn from both recuperative masculinist and pro-feminist positions when designing programs for boys within a gender equity framework. They aligned themselves with pro-feminist views stating that educational responses to problems experienced by boys must address assumptions about men and women in society. Lingard and Douglas argued that boys contract their educational and social options because of their attachment to traditional and limited understandings of masculinity.

Reichert (2001) described attempts by one American boys' school to implement strategies to enhance boys' education and emotional literacy while addressing gender equity. He reported that efforts to challenge dominant understandings of hegemonic masculinity were resisted, and innovations to promote awareness and equity were marginalised by school staff. Reichert concluded that boys at the school experienced new understandings of masculinity and questioned the dominant attitudes regarding gender in the culture.

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) addressed the needs of boys in school by providing readers with a summary of research findings and details of strategies teachers can undertake to enhance education. Denborough (1996) documented a program to educate teenage boys in non-violent ways of asserting their masculinity. The approaches documented by Salisbury and Jackson, and Denborough were well accepted by a number of researchers in this field. They are valued because they assisted teenage boys to question understandings of masculinity using practical strategies integrated within a gender equity paradigm.

#### **2.4.5 Reporting boys' views on masculinity**

Over the past five years there has been a growth in research reporting the views of teenage boys on masculinity. Prominent examples include Phoenix and Frosh (2001), Laberge and Albert (1999), Kindlon and Thompson (1999), Prosser (1999), Pollack (1998, 2000), Slade and Trent (2000), Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli (2001).

Pollack (1998) stated that teenage boys' masculinities are constrained because boys are only able to express half of their emotions. He asserted that boys are free to show emotions associated with being tough, active, angry or moved to rage. Pollack found that there is a

system of restraint that operates which he called the “Boy Code”. Drawing on the research of David and Brannon (1976) he stated that this system is based on four injunctions: be stoic; act with extreme daring; be dominant; do not display “feminine” feelings.

Laberge and Albert (1999) investigated teenage boys’ understandings of masculinity and their perceptions of men who participated in sport dominated by women. Laberge and Albert evaluated the significance of social class and participants’ views on hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell’s (1995) categories of reproduction, resistance and transformation. They found that upper and middle class boys were more likely to describe transformative understandings of masculinity characterised by: respectful relationships with others including women, emotional expressivity and concern for family life. Laberge and Albert claimed that the majority of boys in all classes described masculinity in ways that can be described as hegemonic. Boys’ viewed masculinity as: strength, heterosexuality, control over emotions, and leadership.

Kindlon and Thompson (1999) conducted research based on their clinical psychological work with boys and an extensive review of literature on adolescent health and masculinities. Kindlon and Thompson proposed that urgent action is required to assist teenage boys in developing emotional health and wellbeing. They stated that boys need to be given the opportunity to access masculinities where they can express the full range of emotions.

Phoenix and Frosh (2001) studied the perceptions of masculinity of 11 to 14 year old boys in London. Participants in their study described hegemonic masculinity as if it was an unattainable ideal. Phoenix and Frosh concluded that “narrow”, hegemonic understandings of masculinity dominated. They claimed that this acted against the participants’ construction of alternative, inclusive and relational masculinities.

Slade and Trent (2000) interviewed 1800 Year 9 to 11 South Australian boys looking at their attitudes to school retention and achievement. The researchers aimed at presenting the issues and problems described by the boys. They reported that there was very little discussion among the boys about aspects of masculinity and schooling. However, Slade and Trent pointed to a range of interconnected factors identified by the boys as contributing to their disaffection with school. The main finding of the study was that there was a uniformity of view that the adult world was not listening to the students. Slade and Trent

found that there was a common pattern of dissatisfaction across the sixty school sample. The boys who contributed to the study reported their belief that adults were: disinterested, did not listen, and did not seek the views of teenage boys. Other key findings of their study will be presented in Section 2.5.1 on Teachers.

Prosser (1999) investigated the stated beliefs of approximately three hundred 15 to 17 year old boys attending a private single sex school in Canberra. The aim of the study was to research participants' views on the role of men in today's society. The key finding of the survey was that a significant group of participants believed that men need to be equal partners in relationships contributing to the raising of children and able to share their emotional lives with their partners.

#### **2.4.6 Need for institutional changes**

Salisbury and Jackson's third theme in their introductory chapter proposed some institutional changes they believed were needed in schools. They shared the views of Mac An Ghail (1994) and Connell (1996) that schools play an active role in forming masculinities.

Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 10) stated that schools are more than mirrors to the values of society. They identified three levels of change needed: institutional, hidden curriculum, and official curriculum. Secondary schools are frequently male dominated institutions. Gender aware perspectives are needed when examining the full range of institutional practices.

Examples of school organisational life needing examination include: leadership, discipline, pastoral care, ability groupings, teaching styles, hierarchies and school ethos.

#### **2.4.7 Need for more research**

Connell (1995) and Heward (1988) stressed the need for more research on boys, schooling and masculinity. Connell (1995: 239) assessed the research on the role of schools in shaping masculinities and came to the following conclusion:

Though schools have been a rich site for studying the reproduction of masculinities (from Learning to Labour to Gender Play), and though most of the people doing research on masculinity work in the education industry ( as academics or students), there is surprisingly little discussion of the role of

education in the transformation of masculinity...(But) there is little discussion, informed by research on masculinity, about education for boys in modern mass schooling systems; let alone about the principles that would include girls as well as boys in an educational process addressing masculinity.

Heward's (1988: 202) historical study of Ellesmere School concluded with a recommendation:

In order to further our understanding of the making of masculinity and its effects, we must bring together our knowledge of ..... schools as class and gender reproducers and the extent to which other schools exact a similar kind and equally high price in making boys into men as public schools, like Ellesmere College between 1929 and 1950.

Heward (1988) proposed that there was a significant need for new research to consider the practices of schools as institutions that provide understandings for boys about masculinity.

Kay (1994) and Courtice (1994) studied the masculinity practices of two different private boys' schools. Their research is relevant to this study because both projects showed how research on boys' schools can contribute to increased understanding of the masculinity development processes in schools.

Kay (1994) reported a loose hierarchy of multiple masculinities. He believed that the leadership of the school is attempting to challenge some of the traditional and dominant masculinities. He was hopeful that more sensitive masculinities are increasing their status within this fluid hierarchy. A limitation of Kay's work is that it lacks significant data from students. Kay (1994: 49) noted that:

...interviews and questionnaires to the boys would have given me greater insight into their thinking about what it is to be a man at the school, as well as their views on girls and women.

Kay's research points to the need for student perspectives on masculinity to be accessed in future research. It is another clear indication that there is a need for contemporary Australian research on teenage boys' perspectives of the influence of school processes on their developing understanding of masculinity.

Courtice (1994) investigated elements of the institutional culture of his school. He analysed the language and ritual used in a range of categories of Assemblies: Headmaster's, Special, Chaplain's, and Seniors'. The Annual Speech Night and a letter to parents regarding a Senior Formal are also examined. Courtice (1994: 160) considered each of these rituals separately and he attempted to identify "the range of the dominant masculine narratives across all of these sites". Both Courtice and Kay documented the power of language used when schools gather for rituals.

The current study aims to make a contribution to the field of research on the experiences of teenage boys and masculinity within secondary schools.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, this section of the review has documented the important role of schooling in the construction of masculinities. Research studies support the assertion that schools reproduce culturally dominant understandings of masculinity unless they evaluate their practices. Connell (1996) highlighted the contribution of school as a "site" and "agency" that create masculinities. School leaders and teachers need to consider the assumptions operating in the education of boys in their schools.

## **2.5 Teachers, School Experiences and Masculinity**

This section reviews the role of particular features of schooling on teenage boys' perceptions. It will report the findings of studies directly related to school experiences and teenage boys' understandings of masculinity. Table 2.12 lists the themes used to report prominent studies. Each one of the themes selected is directly related to the aims of this research as reported in Chapter 1. The first strand examines literature on teachers and masculinity, because it is a central concern of the study. Three themes: sport, subjects and discipline, were nominated by Connell (1996) as 'vortices' of masculinity. The final strand, spirituality and religion, is identified because it is pertinent to Catholic boys' schools.



Table 2.12 Themes used for reviewing the literature on Teachers, School Experiences and Masculinity.
Teachers (2.5.1) Sport (2.5.2) Subjects (2.5.3) Discipline (2.5.4) Spirituality and Religion (2.5.5)

## 2.5.1 Teachers

### Importance of teachers

Connell (1996:229) claimed that teachers are a key to educational reform. His analysis of the research literature on educating boys highlighted that teachers need to be engaged in the process of transformation of masculinity and gender equity. Table 2.13 summarises Connell's views on the role of teachers.

Table 2.13 Researcher's Summary of Connell (1996:229-230) on the role of teachers in changing masculinity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Many male teachers have little motive to change conventional understandings of masculinity</li> <li>● Some men become involved in counter sexist work with boys</li> <li>● Diversity of masculinity exist within the teaching profession</li> <li>● Teachers and administrators experience stress caused by violent and resistant boys</li> <li>● Educational, industrial and professional reasons for concern about masculinity</li> <li>● An expansion of educational work on masculinity and boys' programs likely to continue</li> <li>● Schools are weighty institutions, major employers and have capacity to influence gender and the transmission of culture</li> <li>● Teachers and schools impact on masculinity in an unreflective way</li> <li>● Educators need to reflect on their current practices and to recognise that "boys" are not homogeneous.</li> </ul>

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) reported that feminist research has consistently found that teachers give students of all ages messages about what is appropriate behaviour for their gender. Gendered assumptions and behaviour include classroom activities, as well as teacher and student language.

## Perceptions of teachers

There has been limited research on students' views regarding the contribution of teachers to their understanding of masculinity. However, there are indications that teachers viewed favourably by students may have a positive influence on their understanding of masculinity. For this reason research by West (1999) and Slade and Trent (2000) is cited. Further research is needed to investigate the relationship between positive regard for teachers and their contribution to student understandings of masculinity.

West (1999) claimed that boys respond positively to teachers who listened. Slade and Trent (2000), in a recent South Australian study, reported the importance of teachers as an influence on secondary school boys' attitudes to schooling. They found that the boys in their study were able to define clearly the important role of teachers in affecting their attitude towards education. The teenage boys in their study emphasised that 'bad' teachers were the reason why they had problems with school retention and achievement. Slade and Trent (2000: 218) reported that participants believed one good teacher could make a school environment tolerable. They reported a series of sixty defining characteristics of a good teacher. Table 2.14 summarises these features. Participants in most schools in the study reported that less than ten percent of teachers met the criteria of a good teacher.

Table 2.14 Researchers' summary of Slade and Trent (2000:218) Characteristics of Good Teachers	
<b><u>A good teacher does:</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● listen to what you have to say</li><li>● respect you as a friend, treat you like a friend or adult</li><li>● relax, enjoy their day, laugh, especially laugh at mistakes</li><li>● adjust rules and expectations to meet the needs of individuals and circumstances</li><li>● explain the work and make it interesting</li><li>● let you talk and move about the classroom</li><li>● allow you to learn from making a mistake</li></ul>
<b><u>A good teacher does not:</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● humiliate you in front of the class, tell you "you're no good, leave school"</li><li>● write slabs of work on the board to be copied</li><li>● favour girls or the boys who do what they're told</li><li>● keep picking on people who have a bad reputation</li><li>● mark you down because of your behaviour</li></ul>

There is a need for further research on the influence of “good” and “bad” teachers on teenage boys’ perceptions of education and masculinity. Humberstone (1990) investigated students’ perceptions of Physical Education teachers who were promoting non-hegemonic masculinities as part of a British outdoor education centre. Humberstone found that the boys appreciated the PE teachers who adopted an encouraging and inclusive style. They viewed these men as respected role models and “good teachers” who embodied active, nurturing masculinities.

Chapter 5 reports how the participants in the empirical component of this study described their perceptions of teachers and masculinity. This study aims to make a contribution to this new area of research by providing interview data with students’ own words and concepts to help increase understanding of the influence of teachers on teenage boys’ perceptions of masculinity. Lee (2001) proposed that teachers have an important role in the promotion of “hope centred” student masculinities. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 discuss how teachers and schools contribute to student understandings of masculinity and how they can promote masculinities that are “hope centred”, inclusive and broader than limited forms of hegemonic masculinity.

### **Teacher masculinities**

The role of teachers in the construction of masculinity within schools has received attention in research. Mac an Ghaill (1994) commenced the report on his study of the Parnell School with an extensive review of the dominant ideologies of the teachers. Mac an Ghaill (1994: 18-21) classified the teaching staff in three groups: “The Professionals”, “The Old Collectivists”, and “The New Entrepreneurs”. He used criteria including: orientation to teaching and stance on power, race and gender to determine membership. Mac an Ghaill (1994: 24-32) analysed interviews with the teachers and integrated research from others to describe a complex pattern of competing ideologies of gender and sexuality. He found that debates about masculinity expressed in the media were evident in the behaviour of the white, male middle class, heterosexual teachers. Mac an Ghaill (1994: 32) is particularly critical of their lack of acknowledgement of the pattern of power associated with the gender relations in the school.

Mac an Ghaill (1994: 36) proposed that male teachers and male students collude to undermine the role of female teachers. Mac an Ghaill (1994: 153-169) described the

perspectives of male homosexual students towards their teachers and school. He reported that the students were critical of the teachers' attitudes towards gender, sexuality and power. Mac an Ghail (1994: 168) offered evidence to support a feminist critique of gender and schooling. He indicated that his findings were exploratory and required further research.

### **Men and women teachers**

The study by Angus (1993), cited previously, documented the experience of women teachers in a predominantly male environment. Table 2.15 summarises his interpretation of the gender regime of the school.

Table 2.15 Researcher's Summary of Angus (1993: 83-87) on the contribution of teachers to the gender regime of a Christian Brothers' College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual teachers are not to blame for entrenched school processes</li> <li>● Transformation is required at the institutional level to promote gender equity</li> <li>● Male teachers need to take responsibility for providing boys with alternative models beyond hegemonic masculinity</li> <li>● Many male teachers see no need to change their attitudes and behaviour</li> <li>● Problems of harassment and discipline encountered by women teachers are frequently related to the male authority structure</li> <li>● Increased number of women on the staff provides an opportunity for some cultural change</li> <li>● Several competent and articulate women teachers challenged the dominant culture</li> <li>● Women teachers attempted to mediate this domination by fostering a co-operative orientation with staff and students</li> <li>● Women can draw on cultural values like caring as a way of beginning cultural change</li> </ul>

Lingard and Douglas (1999: 80-87) reviewed research on the gender of the teaching profession. Their findings include: women dominate teaching while men dominate educational administration; the call for more male teachers is occurring during a time of restructuring in education; and historical precedents for concern about the number of men in the teaching profession.

Hartman (1999) investigated the reasons why some women teachers choose to work with boys. The findings of her Australian study suggest that women enjoy using boys' energy in the classroom, varying lessons to suit learning style and working in teams with male colleagues.

Bailey (1996b) researched the experience of women teachers in an English boys school. The school experienced a growth in the number of women teachers at the time of the research. She used four key dimensions developed by Askew and Ross (1988) as a framework for her study. Table 2.16 provides a summary of Askew and Ross as reported by Bailey.

Table 2.16 Researcher's Summary of Askew and Ross (1988) as reported by Bailey (1996b) on four key dimensions to the experience of women teachers in a boys' school.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women experience difficulties because their teaching style is different to the accepted masculine norms about authoritarian behaviour.</li> <li>2. Male colleagues undermine the position of women. This can be either unintentional or deliberate. The result perpetuates the idea that women are incompetent.</li> <li>3. Contributions of women to staff meetings are frequently ignored unless they are reiterated by a man. This communicates that women's ideas are of little worth and their presence unnecessary.</li> <li>4. Women teachers are subject to sexual harassment from male staff and students.</li> </ol>

Bailey (1996b) found that the women teachers in the case study school experienced discrimination and disadvantage similar to the analysis provided by Askew and Ross (1988). However, her findings included the positive unintended contribution of government reforms that enabled women to begin to initiate change. Bailey (1996b: 184) described the change achieved as "limited" but women were able to negotiate an improved place within the male ethos of the school. One reason for the improved outcome was that the increased number of women teachers enabled them to function as a pressure group.

The research of Askew and Ross (1988), Angus (1993), Bailey (1996b) Lingard and Douglas (1999) and Hartman (1999) highlights the importance of women teachers within schools that educate boys. The current study will make a contribution to understanding the role of men and women teachers as perceived by teenage boys.

### **Teacher training and professional development**

Meyenn and Parker (2001), West (2002), and James (1999) have identified the role of pre-service teacher training and ongoing professional development in equipping teachers to respond to masculinity, gender and education. Meyenn and Parker (2001) proposed that teachers need to challenge assumptions about boys' behaviour and masculinity. West (2002) recommended that teachers educate themselves and their peers about research on

masculinity. He stated that today's teachers were not educated about masculinity during pre-service University courses.

James (1999) researched the masculine attitudes of a group of mature aged men from building and industrial trades who were retraining as high school technology teachers. She aimed to challenge their assumptions about masculinity during their participation in her educational psychology course. James reported elements of the action research model she undertook with three cohorts of trainee technology teachers. There were two main findings from her study. First, new understandings of masculinity can be promoted by providing men and boys with structured opportunities for openness, closeness and group solidarity. Second, insights drawn from a feminist critique of education can assist men and women to work together as agents of transformation in school.

## **Summary**

There is evidence within the literature to support Connell's (1996) view that teachers are important influences on how masculinity and attitudes towards education are expressed in schools. Teachers are not a homogeneous group (Slade and Trent, 2000). Male teachers exemplify different masculinities (Mac an Ghail, 1994). Women teachers experience discrimination but they can act as catalysts for change (Bailey, 1996b; Angus, 1993).

## **2.5.2 Sport**

Prominent researchers have argued that sport is an important aspect of school experience in the development of student masculinities (McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000; Hickey, Fitzclarence and Matthews, 2000; Salsbury and Jackson, 1996; Connell, 1996). There is a significant academic literature on this aspect of masculinities research. The first notable contribution to be considered here is Connell's (1996) assessment of sport's contribution to schooling and masculinities.

Section 2.4.3 reported Connell's (1996: 217) view that sport was one of three vortices of masculinity. He described sport as a blend of power, symbol and emotion that schools use to define hegemonic masculinity in the consumer society. He cited four studies to support his view that high profile contact sports reinforced the hierarchy of masculinities. Connell

stated that these boys' sports have an important place within the cultural life of the schools. He is critical of this because sport acts to replicate conventional understandings of masculinity and gender. This short section of the chapter will highlight some of the recurring themes relevant to teenage boys, schooling and sport.

### **Sport and the male body**

The late twentieth century has seen a rise in the objectification of the male body in sport, art, advertising, and attitudes within Western society. Dutton (1995) provided a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which the male body has been portrayed since Greek culture in the fifth century BCE. He illustrated changing conceptions of male beauty and described the current understanding of the muscular male body as a symbol of pleasure and power. Dutton (1995: 395- 396) proposed that contemporary interest in highly muscular masculine images is a reflection of the uncertainties of the age. Table 2.17 summarises Dutton's analysis of the reasons for this interest in the perfect male image.

Table 2.17 Researcher's Summary of Dutton's (1995: 395- 396) proposed reasons for contemporary interest in images of highly muscular male bodies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 'Lifestyles' have replaced life-meaning. Hedonism and morality based on self interest has replaced traditional religions.</li> <li>● Rise of television, sedentary lifestyle, technology and a preoccupation with the visual.</li> <li>● Images of success in a competitive society are associated with youth, vitality and fitness. This as well as fear of ageing has contributed to the growth of the fitness industry.</li> <li>● The body has become a commodity, an object of mass consumerism.</li> <li>● AIDS and fear of sexually transmitted diseases has made sexual relationships problematic. This has lead to increased interest in erotic images. Widespread public representations of naked and near naked bodies as objects of desire.</li> <li>● Some men are uncertain or defensive about the entry of women into traditional male domains. Some embrace a Rambo style of macho, muscular masculinity that has a tendency towards domination.</li> <li>● The portrayal of well built men as desirable sex objects linked to the increased public visibility of homosexuals as consumers, and the rise of sexually emancipated women.</li> <li>● Unprecedented interest in the developed male body is a reflection of wider debate about the nature of male identity in contemporary society.</li> </ul>

Dutton (1995) stated that the widespread interest in images of highly muscular men is symptomatic of uncertainty in society. The relevance of Dutton's research for this study is that he provides a historical and contemporary perspective to the images of men that

currently surround teenage boys. This research project may assist in analysing the impact of muscular images of men on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity.

Light and Kirk (2000) researched masculinity in the context of the first grade Rugby Union team of a Brisbane GPS school. They described the importance of rugby in the production of a masculinity that is centred on the body as a weapon of domination and power. Light and Kirk (2000) cited the work of Bourdieu (1990) and explained that participants learn about the operation of the social world through their involvement in games.

Grogan and Richards (2002) conducted an exploratory study with boys, teenagers and young adults on body image. They found that participants viewed discussing mens' bodies as a "sensitive" topic. They reported that sixteen year olds experience peer pressure to conform with the male ideal of being young, lean and muscular. Grogan and Richards also noted that participants negotiated a balance between the desired image of being muscular and the unacceptable image of extreme muscularity.

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) reviewed research on masculinity, the body and teenage boys. They identified the need for effective education for students and presented a series of learning activities for teachers to assist male students to be critical of current understandings of the ideal male body. Lingard and Douglas (1999), Connell (1995) and Messner (1992) described the role of the body in masculinity, sport and gender relations. Messner (1992) reported that teenage footballers needed to endure pain and that coaches frequently shun injured players. Prain (2000) claimed that boys needed to demonstrate a physical toughness through sport and this can result in chronic injury. A key finding of these studies is that teenage boys learn attitudes, how to use their body, strength and skill in competitive team sport.

### **Competitive sport, privilege and status**

Achievement in sport is granted privilege and high status in society. This is a feature of competitive school sport. Messner (1992), Sabo (1994), Connell (1996), Lesko (2000) and Light and Kirk (2000) have each described the power of football and other high status school sports to reinforce hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Fitzclarence and Hickey (2000) asserted that violent and abusive behaviour can be rationalised in sports like Australian Rules football. They proposed that adults need to



ensure that boys engaged in sport have experiences that are “positive and socially useful” (Fitzclarence and Hickey, 2000: 70). They described the dominant pattern in football as “combative” but outlined the positive role coaches, teachers, parents can play with boys and teenagers. Their recommendations are summarised in Table 2.18.

Table 2.18 Researcher’s Summary of Fitzclarence and Hickey (2000: 80). Recommendations on how to change attitudes with junior aged footballers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote values of self supervision and respectful behaviour.</li> <li>● Reinforcement of alternative understandings about what it means to be a decent footballer.</li> <li>● Coaches, teachers, parents and others supporting one another to change expectations.</li> <li>● Consistent message that abusive and irresponsible behaviours are unacceptable under any circumstances.</li> </ul>

Gard (2001) investigated the role of school sport and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) in New South Wales schools. He concluded that the integration of personal development and wellbeing within the school curriculum provided valuable opportunities to broaden student understandings and participation. Gard claimed that aggressive, competitive forms of masculinity dominate school sport and PDHPE classes unless teachers address common practices.

De Garis (2000) researched expressions of masculinity found in a New York City boxing gym. He outlined the findings of other studies that viewed boxing as a sport promoting hegemonic masculinity. De Garis found that the men in his study demonstrated attitudes of intimacy, self care and engaged in respectful behaviour towards others. He acknowledged that his findings were not consistent with the results of other studies. De Garis proposed that his case study is evidence of the practicality of the principles outlined by Sabo and Messner (1994) in their 11 point strategy to change thinking about sport.

Lingard and Douglas (1999) stated that debates about the place of competitive sport in the lives of teenage school boys occur because of the divergent agendas of pro-feminist and recuperative masculinist men. They stated that recuperative masculinists work against broadening cooperative sporting opportunities for boys when it denigrates the hegemony of traditional masculine body contact sport.

Katz (1995) described a project to change the attitudes of College footballers towards women. The Mentors in Violence Prevention Project involved students in an American university who worked with their peers and high school students to change group norms about accepted understandings of masculinity. An important focus of the program was challenging attitudes condoning sexual assault and other forms of violence against women.

The findings of these studies support the view that competitive sport is an important influence on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. There are indications from research that underlying assumptions can be challenged to enable traditional sport to have a positive influence upon teenage participants.

### **Sport as transformation**

Messner (1992: 50) described the importance of sport in transforming the identity of athletes. He found that athletes experience a form of “emotional merging of self and crowd”. This has both positive and negative consequences. Messner concluded that sporting participants' sense of self can be determined by others reactions to their most recent performances.

Pollack (1998) proposed that sport can be a very positive experience for boys. He found that when boys are comfortable and can express a full range of emotions, sport transforms boys into more fulfilled young people. Pollack asserted that this process of transformation works in four ways. They are represented in Table 2.19.

Table 2.19 Summary of Pollack (1998). Why sport is transformational for boys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emotional expression. Boys learn how to deal with feelings of failure, shame, sadness and limitation. They have freedom of emotional expression and personal identity.</li> <li>● Friendship and affection. Boys are able to connect with other boys, end social isolation and extend care in socially acceptable ways.</li> <li>● Sense of mastery. Boys who have parents and coaches who work towards confidence and skill building experience enhanced self-esteem.</li> <li>● Emotional resilience. Boys who participate in sport deal with the experience of losing. This can assist boys in accommodating their fears and vulnerabilities.</li> </ul>

The view that sport can be transformational for boys conflicts with some feminist perspectives on sport. McKay, Messner and Sabo (2000: 6) reported that critical feminist reviews of men and sport during the 1980s and 1990s highlighted negative outcomes. The

authors, who identify with a pro-feminist approach to masculinities, advocated a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of men in sport. McKay, Messner and Sabo argued that research must be diverse, inclusive and acknowledge the complexity of sporting masculinities.

### **Alternative sporting experiences**

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) provide a comprehensive analysis of the benefits of alternative sporting experiences for boys. Table 2.20 summarises their view.

<p>Table 2.20 Summary of Salisbury and Jackson (1996: 209-215) Alternative school sporting experiences for boys.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mixed games. Provide a wider range of sport for girls and boys. Emphasis on winning becomes less obsessive. Boys not restricted to traditional masculine sport.</li> <li>● Working towards a balance between co-operation and competition in school sport. Sport and Physical Education programs to acknowledge explicitly diverse abilities of boys rather than a single narrow model of masculinity.</li> <li>● Dance for boys. Need to promote attitude change and assumptions of male PE teachers. Address the fear that dance is unmanly. Positive consequences of dance for physical skills and stereotyped attitudes.</li> <li>● School sport as personal challenge. Achievement broader than beating an opponent. Personal discoveries associated with long distance and marathon running. Sports such as gymnastics, field events: jumping and throwing, sailing can provide opportunities for boys to achieve personal targets at their own level.</li> </ul>

Schools that seek to engage boys in alternative approaches to sport may find it conflicts with teenagers' perceptions of appropriate sport for boys. Laberge and Albert (1999) reported that teenage boys tend to report negative perceptions of men who participate in sport that transgress traditional gender boundaries. They found that boys who were middle and upper class, as well as participants with transformative understandings of masculinity were more likely to be supportive of men's participation in sports traditionally associated with women (such as synchronized swimming, rhythmic gymnastics).

### **Summary**

The contribution of sport to the development of masculinities at school and within wider society continues to attract considerable interest from researchers. While it is possible to make generalisations about the role of sport as an influence on teenage boys' understandings

of masculinities, a review of the literature highlights the diversity of contemporary experience and underlines the value of a more nuanced approach. Some pro-feminists contest the value of sport because they believe it replicates hegemonic masculinity. However, others indicate that assumptions behind competitive sport can be challenged to enable positive and personally constructive participation from more boys.

### **2.5.3 Subjects**

School subjects, curriculum and classroom learning are important aspects of schooling related to teenage boys and masculinity. This section of the chapter will report on some prominent studies that are relevant to school subjects and masculinity.

Connell (1996: 216) nominated “boys’ subjects” as the first vortex of masculinity. Connell (1996, 2000) reported the gender imbalances within subject choices for the NSW Higher School Certificate and School Certificate examinations. He cited this evidence in support of his view that a traditional gendered pattern of study continues with boys dominating enrolment in Engineering Science and Physics, and being in the minority in subjects such as Drama, Food Technology and Biology.

Lingard and Douglas (1999) reviewed research evidence confirming that boys are over represented in remedial classes and are more likely to have special learning needs. They also reported that boys are more likely to be suspended and excluded from classes. Jackson (2002) argued that some boys’ limited participation in school subjects could be understood as a self-protection strategy. She asserted that an anti school masculinity or ‘laddishness’ was adopted by some teenage boys to preserve their sense of self-worth. Table 2.21 presents four self-worth protection strategies identified by Jackson (2002).

Table 2.21  
Self-worth Protection Strategies proposed by Jackson (2002: 42-47)

- Procrastination. Putting off work to the last minute provides an excuse as well as deflecting attention from any lack of ability.
- Intentional withdrawal of effort and rejection of academic work. Devaluing the task, promoting the understanding that they are capable of success but choose not to participate.
- Avoiding the appearance of working and promoting the appearance of effortless achievement. ‘Effortless achievement’ is the ideal.
- Disruptive behaviour. Benefits include: increased status; shift attention onto behaviour and off poor performance; poor performance attributed to inattention; and sabotage efforts and achievements of classmates.

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) reviewed research on boys’ attitudes towards English and literacy concluding that dominant cultural assumptions about masculinity contribute to literacy being perceived as a feminised activity. This view is also asserted by Connell (1996, 2000) and Martino (1998). Martino (1998) noted that some boys viewed English classes unfavourably because of the emphasis on emotional expression and the lack of acceptance that achievement in English was an appropriate masculine activity. Salisbury and Jackson (1996), House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training (2002) and Moloney (2000) are three examples of publications reporting strategies that enhance boys’ attitudes towards achievement in aspects of classroom learning where their perceptions of masculinity can act against full participation in the curriculum.

Physical Education has received some attention in the literature as an influence on masculinity. It is a part of the curriculum that is important to masculinity because of its connection with sport, the body and teenage boys’ self-understandings. Parker (1996) reported that Physical Education plays an important role enforcing peer group hierarchies and student masculinities. He stated that teachers required awareness in accommodating the diverse needs of the three groups of students he identified “Hard Boys”, “Conformists” and “Victims”. Wright (2000) described the role of Physical Education and school sport in marginalising some boys and reinforcing patriarchy. She advocated the need for individual and institutional change. Wright proposed that practitioners: review the values implicit within sport, and develop new opportunities so that boys and girls experience sport without oppression. Light and Fawns (2001) described how a “Teaching Games for Understanding” approach succeeds in promoting holistic Physical Education, integrating words, thought and action.

Research into the contribution of school subjects to teenage boys' understandings of masculinity is at a comparatively early stage. There is a need for further studies to inform the research community and classroom practitioners on how the school curriculum can enhance student masculinities. There are indications that hegemonic understandings of masculinity are limiting schooling experiences for some boys.

## 2.5.4 Discipline

Connell's (1996: 217) second vortex of masculinity is discipline. He believed that adult control in school is maintained by a discipline and power system that influences boys' understandings of masculinity. Table 2.22 summarises Connell's ideas about the importance of school discipline.

Table 2.22 Researcher's summary of Connell (1996: 217). Discipline, vortex of masculinity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers use gender to shame boys stating they are “acting like a girl”.</li> <li>● Previously, boys received more corporal punishment than girls, currently boys receive more suspensions than girls.</li> <li>● Boys learnt to use disciplinary power themselves in traditional prefect systems.</li> <li>● Contests with authority contribute to formation of masculine identities including “protest masculinity”.</li> </ul>

Angus (1993) reported that violence continued to be associated with discipline and authority at the Christian Brothers' College in his study. This association was present even though corporal punishment had virtually ceased during the time of his investigation. Student management and classroom control by teachers was influenced by the distant threat of physical punishment. Angus explained that this reinforced hegemonic masculinity, marginalised women teachers and in the view of some teachers acted as a barrier to open, positive relationships between teachers and students.

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) found in their study that many male teachers asserted their authority by imposing discipline based on fear and intimidation. They stated that male teachers viewed discipline as a competition to increase their status within the school. The 'tough male' approach may have some benefits but its domination has significant shortcomings including indirect promotion of bullying, undermining of counselling and

relational approaches to student behaviour which are marginalised as ‘soft’ by some male teachers.

Meyenn and Parker (2001) proposed that any analysis of problematic school boy behaviour needs to be accompanied by an investigation of current debates about boys, education and masculinity. They accepted that teenage boys are more likely to be engaged in anti-social behaviour than teenage girls, and proposed that teacher assumptions need to be challenged in both pre-service and professional development courses.

Discipline is a feature of school experience that is reported in the literature as contributing to schooling influences on teenage boys’ perceptions of masculinity. School systems of discipline and punishment can reinforce hegemonic understandings of masculinity based on violence and intimidation. Whilst there are alternative approaches to student management and discipline including respectful strategies published by Rogers (1998), their use has yet to be reported within the schooling and masculinities research literature.

### **2.5.5 Spirituality and Religion**

There is a significant gap in the literature regarding the contribution of spirituality and religion to teenage boys’ understanding of masculinity. An extensive review of the research literature has identified an absence of research studies relating teenage boys, masculinity and spirituality. The aim of this section of the literature review is to incorporate the work of authors who might contribute to development of understandings within this emerging area. The literature cited will frequently be propositions of authors based on theory rather than research findings. When conclusions are reported from research studies, they will be clearly identified.

There is some literature on the relationship between youth and spirituality. Webber (2002) surveyed research literature on the spirituality of young people in Australia and concluded the majority of youth were interested in spiritual questions but viewed established religions as largely irrelevant. Carr-Gregg and Shale (2002) stated many young people lacked a sense of meaning, and proposed that spirituality made a significant contribution to the wellbeing of adolescents. Engebretson (2002) found that the 14 year olds in her study displayed personal, communal and social justice dimensions in their spirituality. She reported that

young people expressed spirituality in terms of relationships. Hay and Nye (1998) researched the spirituality of younger age groups, specifically, six and ten year olds. They identified a 'relational consciousness' that underpinned the spirituality of children that integrated their world into a holistic relationship with reality. Tacey (1999) claimed that youth spirituality is cosmic, primal and actively seeking transcendence. Crawford and Rossiter (1996) stated that young people, even those living in a religious household, formed values with less dependence on the traditional sources of religious guidance.

Particular aspects of teenage boys' spirituality have received attention from Pollack (2000, 1998), Kindlon and Thompson (1999), Gurian (1999) and Rohr (1998). Each of these writers proposed that teenage boys' need to be supported so they can develop a sense of meaning and an inner life. Pollack (2000, 1998) and Kindlon and Thompson (1999) argued that adults need to encourage teenage boys' spiritual search including prayer, ritual and questions of meaning. Gurian (1999) advocated that teenage boys be introduced to mythology and begin to comprehend their place in the cosmos. Rohr (1998) outlined why teenage boys need to participate in a ritual of initiation to form a cosmology of meaning.

## **2.6 Summary**

There is a significant academic literature related to masculinity, schooling, teachers and teenage boys. Chapter 2 reviewed a range of prominent studies to highlight themes relevant to the aims of this research project. The chapter was structured to provide an initial overview of the definitional debates about the nature of masculinity. This was followed by a brief analysis of the contribution of factors such as families, sport, school and media that influence teenage boys' understandings of masculinity. The remainder of this literature review examined research findings related to the influence of teachers and school experiences on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. The aim of the literature review component of the study was to analyse current research and provide a context for interpreting the interview data. The findings of the qualitative component of this study will be evaluated in Chapters 4 to 7 in relation to pertinent research previously identified in the literature review.



# **Chapter 3**

## **Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology adopted for the study. It includes a description of the research design, data collection, data analysis, a consideration of validity and reliability, in relation to the qualitative investigation component of the study.

### **3.2 Research Design**

#### **3.2.1 Literature Review and Qualitative Investigation**

This study is in two parts. The first examined the extensive literature related to masculinity and boys' education to identify key issues that have a bearing on boys' perceptions of relationships between schooling and their notions of masculinity. While much has been written about masculinity in recent years, there is a need to review this from the perspective of its implications for the education of boys, and to relate this to the literature more specifically concerned with masculinity and education.

The second part of the study was an exploratory investigation of senior secondary school students' understanding of masculinity, and their perceptions of the influence of schooling on masculinity. It addressed some of the issues highlighted in the review of the literature. Data was collected on teenage boys' views of the perceived influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity. The emphasis in this exploratory study was on reporting detailed statements about masculinity in the students' own words, adding to the Australian data on the views of teenage boys about masculinity. Hence, a small number of in-depth interviews was chosen in preference to the use of a questionnaire with larger numbers.

#### **3.2.2 Research Design of the Qualitative Investigation**

The qualitative investigation addressed objectives two, three and four of the study as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.2. The three objectives of this aspect of the study were to:

2. Investigate teenage boys' understanding of masculinity.
3. Investigate teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity.
4. Analyse student perceptions' of how teachers and school experiences influence their understanding of masculinity.

The specific research strategy involved students from two single sex Catholic boys' schools. There were two reasons for choosing this type of school.

First, there is a need for more research on Catholic boys' schools and masculinity. The review of the literature demonstrated that there was limited research with this particular focus. Angus (1993) investigated the cultures of masculinity in a Catholic boys' school in the 1980s. Martino (1998) researched boys in a Catholic co-educational school. Further research can help increase understanding of how contemporary students interpret the gender dimensions of schooling. Connell (1996: 216) stated that boys' subjects, discipline and sport act as "masculinity vortices". There has been no recent research to assess whether teenage boys in single sex Australian Catholic schools perceive these features of school life as influential on their understanding of masculinity.

Second, this type of school is the professional context of the researcher. This study arises from the educational need for more research to improve understanding of the relationships between teenage boys, masculinity and schooling. The researcher would be able to disseminate and apply the findings of the study directly in his and other Catholic boys' schools.

Two related data collection methods were used in the qualitative investigation : individual interviews and group interviews. Thirty eight Year 11 students participated. Ten students (26%) participated in individual interviews and twenty eight students (74%) in group interviews of two or three students. No significant difference in responses and behaviour of the participants was noted between those interviewed individually and those in small groups. The researcher was a member of staff in one of the schools. No current, former or future students of the researcher were interviewed. There was no significant difference in responses and behaviour between the students from the two schools. Section 3.3, Data Collection, gives a more detailed description of the information gathering procedures.

The characteristics of the research design are summarised in Table 3.1 and explained in 3.2.1. Justification of the Research Design.

Table 3.1 Summary of Research Design: Qualitative Investigation.	
<b>1. Qualitative inquiry of teenage boys’ perceptions from two Catholic boys’ schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This part of the study collects the views of senior students on their perceptions of masculinity and schooling.</li> <li>• The interview questions have links with some of the issues noted in the literature.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Verbatim reporting of student perceptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Year 11 students as participants in individual and group interviews.</li> <li>• Participating students asked open-ended questions from the interview schedule. No definitions of masculinity were proposed by the researcher.</li> <li>• Accurate recording and transcription of the comments verbatim of the participants’ answers to the interview questions.</li> <li>• Participants’ answers were analysed and grouped thematically using the constant comparative method (Maykut &amp; Morehouse, 1994).</li> </ul>
<b>3. Sample size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38 participants were interviewed in order to gain a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973).</li> <li>• Detailed analysis and reporting of the full range of responses to all questions.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Study within the professional context of the researcher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study brings a research perspective to the professional concerns of the researcher who works as a leader in Catholic boys’ schools.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.3 Justification of Research Design

The Research Design will be justified according to the four distinguishing characteristics of the study described in Table 3.1: qualitative inquiry, student perceptions, sample size and professional context of the researcher.

#### **Qualitative inquiry of teenage boys’ perceptions from two Catholic boys’ schools**

Patton (1990: 13) reported that qualitative research investigates “selected issues in depth and detail”. Patton (1990: 13) proposed that qualitative inquiry is not constrained by “predetermined categories of analysis” but is able to collect detailed information that increases understanding. Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) stated that qualitative research interprets “phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. The empirical component of this study used qualitative inquiry because it suited the research objectives. Kvale (1996) indicated that the purpose of research interviews is to gain understanding of the interviewee’s description and interpretation of the meaning of phenomenon. Consequently,

the specific research strategies of using individual and group interviews were appropriate for investigating the participants' perceptions.

Interviews, including Individual and Group Interviews, have been used extensively by researchers investigating teenage boys' views on masculinity including Willis (1977), Mac an Ghail (1994), Lefkowitz (1997), Martino (1998), Pollack (1998), Kindlon & Thompson (1999) and Slade & Trent (2000). This research was reviewed in Chapter 2. The research design chosen for this component of the study follows an accepted paradigm of qualitative inquiry that has been employed in other related studies.

### **Verbatim reporting of student perceptions**

The perceptions, experiences, beliefs and recollections of teenage boys have provided valuable insights into how adolescent males interpret masculinity. Willis (1977) investigated the connection between masculinity, socio-economic status and employment. Mac an Ghail (1994) and Martino (1998) researched teenage boys' attitudes towards masculinity, sexuality and schooling. Psychologists Pollack (2000, 1998), Kindlon & Thompson (1999) have published research on the perceptions of teenage boys in the United States of America. Slade & Trent (2000) reported the views of South Australian teenage boys on teachers and schooling. The qualitative component of this study will report the perceptions of teenage boys in their own words.

There is no set definition of masculinity or image of being a man today inserted into the study. This study intended to record and analyse the views of the young men interviewed. Whilst Browne & Fletcher (1995) and Salisbury & Jackson (1996) had proposals about the models of masculinity schools could promote, this research did not set out to compare the students' perceptions with any particular definition of masculinity.

An important feature of this study was the use of audio taping and transcription. This provided accurate records of the participants' answers. Audio taping assisted in giving reliability to the data analysis and it increased the validity of the research methods (Maxwell: 1992). Section 3.5 on Validity describes the significance of the use of audio tapes and transcripts.

## **Sample size**

The size of sample needed in qualitative research has received significant attention in the research literature. Patton (1990) stated that there is no fixed sample size in qualitative research. Merriam (1998) indicated that an adequate number of participants enables the researcher to address the research question set at the beginning of the study. Maykut & Morehouse (1994) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) supported this view. The current research study followed the recommendation of Maykut & Morehouse (1994) and commenced data collection without a pre-determined sample size. Merriam (1998), Maykut & Morehouse (1994), Patton (1990), and Lincoln & Guba (1985) believed that sampling concludes when the point of redundancy is reached and little new information would be added by increasing the sample. Specific indicators of redundancy in this study included: repetition of the same responses to questions by participants in the pilot and main phases of data collection; similar patterns of responses in both individual and group interviews; and common themes in answers with no significant difference between the two schools. The criterion of redundancy was used to determine that no further interviews were needed.

The research design involved giving a high priority to accuracy of recording, transcription and analysis rather than selecting a large sample size. This characteristic of the study, the detailed analysis of student perceptions, is used to give a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). A “thick description” is a detailed qualitative analysis of a particular culture or social group. Comparable qualitative research on teenage boys, schooling and masculinity by Willis (1977), Walker (1988), Angus (1993), Mac an Ghail (1994), and Martino (1998) have all involved limited numbers of participants.

## **Professional context of the researcher**

The research project was conducted within the genre of participant researcher, practitioner based enquiry or teacher as researcher (Avery, 1990; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992; Wagner, 1993; Reimer & Bruce, 1994; Murray & Lawrence, 2000). Teacher as researcher has become an acknowledged field within educational research literature. The following characteristics are features of this field of research. Lytle & Cochran-Smith (1992) proposed that inquiry enables teachers to extend their knowledge of their professional context. Avery (1990) stated that school based researchers are motivated by a desire to assist students and to

teach more effectively. Reimer & Bruce (1994) claimed that school based researchers have distinct advantages and bring invaluable expertise to research studies because of their familiarity with school culture. Wagner (1993) reported that participant researchers have the opportunity to generate knowledge that brings together action, inquiry and understanding. This qualitative investigation acknowledged the arguments of Murray & Lawrence (2000) on the value of practitioner based enquiry. They claimed that practitioner based enquiry is an opportunity to increase understanding of the professional behaviour of educators and that it offers a way to inform and promote change in schools. The design of this study is in keeping with the goal of the Doctor of Education thesis to be relevant to the professional context of the candidate (King, 1997).

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Data was collected using standardised open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990). Participants were involved in either individual interviews or group interviews. This section of the chapter describes the main aspects of the data collection process.

#### **3.3.1 Pilot and main phases of the study**

Data collection began with a series of eight pilot individual interviews and two pilot group interviews during Semester 2, 1998. The primary aim of the pilot interviews was to trial the interview questions (Janesick, 1994; Merriam, 1998). Students selected for pilot interviews were a purposive sample (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Patton, 1990). Purposive sampling is where participants are selected for inclusion because they will increase the variability of the sample. Pilot interviews were conducted in the researcher's school. Purposive sampling was used to access a range of students who demonstrated variability in their involvement in school. It included senior students with various patterns of subjects, sporting and cultural involvements, and levels of participation in school activities. No current or former students of the researcher were invited to participate.

The conclusions from the pilot individual and group interviews were: confirmation that participants were able to answer the questions; improved audio recording equipment was needed to assist in transcription. There was only one change to the interview schedule from the pilot to the main phases of the investigation. Question 16 on role models in the school

was added to gain a greater understanding of participants' perceptions of adults they regarded as influential.

The second or main round of nine group interviews and two individual interviews followed this during 1999. Data was collected from students in both schools participating in the study. Participants in the main round from the researcher's school were selected using purposive sampling and the same criteria outlined for the pilot phase of the investigation. Students involved in the study from the second school were invited to participate by the Year 11 Co-ordinator who was nominated by the Principal as the contact person for the researcher. The Year 11 Co-ordinator was instructed to invite students with wide variety of programs of study, different patterns of involvement and participation in school. This instruction was followed and the students selected from the second school did demonstrate significant variability in their participation in school life.

Data from the pilot study was analysed using the constant comparative method and responses to each question were grouped into categories. Section 3.4 on Data Analysis provides more information on the constant comparative method. This analysis of pilot study data led to the determination of principal inductive categories in the responses. Data from the main phase of the study was analysed separately from the pilot study data according to the same constant comparison method to assess whether there were any notable differences between data collected in the pilot and main phases of the study. The inductive categories that emerged from the analysis of the data from the main phase of the study were similar to those from the pilot study; there were no significant differences in the nature and scope of the data in these two phases of the study.

Following data analysis for both phases of the study, the decision was taken to pool the data collected in the pilot and main phases of the study. The primary reason for this decision was that there was no significant difference in the pattern of responses of participants between the two rounds of data collection. The secondary reason for the combining of data was the use of the same interview questions in both the pilot and main phases, with the exception of the one added question that provided an opportunity for more data on role modelling as noted above. Table 3.2 provides a guide to the sources of the student quotations cited in this thesis.

Each quotation is accompanied by an Individual and Group Interview Number that can be read in conjunction with Table 3.2 to clarify whether it is from the Pilot or the Main Phase.

	Individual Interviews	Group Interviews
--	-----------------------	------------------

Deleted: ¶

Pilot Phase of Study	St James' College Interviews 1 to 8	St James' College Group Interviews 1 and 2
Main Phase of Study	St Mark's College Interviews 9 and 10	St Mark's College Group Interviews 3 to 9 St James' College Group Interviews 10 to 11

### 3.3.2 Schools and students in the study

Participants in the research project were Year 11 students attending two Catholic boys' schools in the metropolitan area of an Australian city. Access to the second school was sought via a letter to the Principal who gave approval to students in his school participating in the study. Pseudonyms have been used for the schools and for each of the participants to preserve anonymity.

The research did not aim to compare one school with another. The researcher was a member of staff in one of the schools. Attention was given to the style and extent of the responses of participants in the two schools. During the process of data analysis responses from students in both schools were assessed. There was little apparent difference in the pattern of student responses between schools for most questions. This was noted even though participants in one school knew the researcher.

When differences between the schools occurred, they are clarified using the following two methods. First, when there was variation in student responses between the schools this was noted in the relevant sections of Chapters 5 and 6. Second, Table 3.2 provides a guide for identifying the quoted participants' schools. These inclusions are designed to promote transparency in reporting the research without engaging in a comparison of schools which is not an aim of this study.

The thesis reports little difference between the two schools. There was some variation in participants' responses to particular questions. They can be attributed to the idiosyncratic differences of particular school cultures. For example, students in one school routinely reported that one teacher was a particularly important role model of masculinity. Another variation was the value placed on singing as a feature of masculinity in the other school. However, students in both schools described understandings of masculinity that were



remarkable similar and any differences are given prominence in the appropriate sections of the thesis.

Both Catholic boys' schools shared some common features. They were founded by the same religious order of Brothers. Their school population was over one thousand students. One school had a religious Brother as Principal and the other a lay man in this role. Both Principals are given pseudonyms beginning with Mister in order to minimise chances of identification. A brief outline of some characteristics of the two schools follows.

St Mark's College is a local comprehensive Catholic High School for boys in an established suburban area. St Mark's College is operated by the diocesan Catholic Education Office. The clientele is very multicultural with students coming from families with a wide socio-economic background. Some students join the College in Year 11 having completed their School Certificate at Year 10 junior high schools. The majority of St Mark's students continue from Years 7 to 12 at the College. The school is well served by a local train station. A significant group of Catholic students in the local area would by-pass St Mark's College to attend more prestigious private Catholic schools in the inner suburbs. This trend has accelerated over the past decade. St Mark's College has a reputation in the local area as a strong sporting school.

St James' College is a private Catholic boys' school owned and operated by a congregation of teaching Brothers. Since the 1970s, there has been a rapid increase in the size of the school and the proportion of day students within the enrolment of the College. Currently approximately one fifth of the College are boarding students, the majority of whom come from rural and regional areas of the state. Day students come from both the local area and more distant locations. Students commuted from metropolitan, and urban fringe suburbs and semi-rural towns to come to St James' College. It is located in a growing part of the city and there is significant demand for places. Tuition fees are within the reach of families from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances. Most students come from a middle class background, with a significant group coming from higher income households. St James' College has a large percentage of its students with an Anglo-Celtic heritage. This dominates the demographic profile of the student population. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a range of ethnic and cultural traditions found within the College population. St James' College is

the only private Catholic boys' school in this part of the city. It has a reputation as a traditional school that is well known for its success in sport.

### **3.3.3 Standardised Open-ended Interviews**

The purpose of qualitative research interviews is to find out the views of other people (Patton, 1990). Open-ended interviews attempt to access the perceptions of participants without the constraints of pre-designed response categories for answers. Patton (1990) described the characteristics of standardised open-ended interviews. These characteristics include: set of carefully worded questions, each participant is asked the same questions in the same order, and flexibility in probing is more limited. Each of these characteristics applied to this study. The reasons for choosing standardised open-ended interviewing were to: maximise opportunity for participants to describe their perceptions; assist in gathering data that could be analysed easily.

### **3.3.4 Interview Schedule**

Interview schedule development was informed by: the objectives of the study; literature on education, masculinity and qualitative research; presentations to supervisors and to doctoral research forums. The result of this process was the development of an interview schedule or interview guide composed of what Patton (1990) described as clear, singular questions.

The teenage boys in the study were asked a sequence of open-ended questions that aimed at investigating their perceptions of the role of teachers and school experiences as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. Questions were designed to engage the interest of the participants to share their views on masculinity, teachers and schooling.

Table 3.3 lists the interview questions. Appendix 4 gives the full text of the interview questions and the associated statements "direct announcement format" (Patton, 1990, p322). The purpose of the direct announcement format was to inform the participants of what will be asked in the next part of the interview (Patton, 1990).

Probes and follow up questions were used when necessary to encourage participants to expand on their responses to questions (Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Elaboration probes included verbal and non-verbal cues (Patton, 1990).

The interview questions were written to address objectives two and three of the study. Specifically this meant: Questions 12 to 15 provided data for objective two; and Questions 1 to 11, 16 and 17, for objective three.

Table 3.3 Schedule of Interview Questions.	
1.	Can you tell the story of an experience or an event where a teacher said or did something that made you think about what it means to be a man? If yes, please describe what happened.
2.	Have your teachers influenced your understanding of masculinity? Please explain.
3.	Do the teachers' messages about masculinity come across to you? Please explain.
4.	Do the teachers' views on masculinity come across to you via subtle or explicit ways? (i.e. direct or indirect ways) Please explain.
5.	Have your teachers said or done anything which gives the impression that one form of masculinity is best? If yes, describe what was said or done.
6.	Has this school influenced your understanding of masculinity? If yes, how has it influenced you?
7.	Does this school promote one particular understanding of masculinity? Or does it promote a number of understandings of masculinity? If yes describe them.
8.	Does the culture or spirit of this school influence your understanding of masculinity? Please explain.
9.	Please explain whether any of these features of school life have influenced your understanding of masculinity? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-left: 40px;"> <span>sport</span> <span>discipline and pastoral care</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-left: 40px;"> <span>school subjects</span> <span>religious events like Masses and retreats</span> </div>
10.	Are you satisfied with the ways that masculinity is portrayed in your school? Why? Why not? Are any changes necessary in your school?
11.	If you had a son, would you send him to this school? Why? Why not?
12.	What does it mean to be a man today?
13.	What do you understand masculinity to mean?
14.	Are there different types of masculinity? If yes, describe them.
15.	What has influenced your understanding of masculinity? Please try to identify them.
16.	Is there any adult in the school who is a good role model for you?

### 3.3.5 Conduct of Interviews

Bailey (1996a: 49-52) proposed that researchers need to gain access at multiple levels during field research. At the highest level, the procedures used to gain access to school students are described in 3.3.9 Ethical Considerations. At the level of the students, steps were taken by

the researcher to promote good rapport with the participants from the beginning of the interviews (Fontana & Frey 1994: 367). These included: welcoming verbal and non-verbal cues, the use of an introductory paragraph to highlight the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. One strategy to build rapport was the use of an informal opening question to the participants about their choice of breakfast. This question served to check the operation and volume of the audio tape recording as well as to promote rapport (Merriam 1998: 87). The first question in this study was non-threatening and open-ended to ease the participants into the area of research. This was selected to commence the interview process with an invitation to recall an experience or tell a story.

### **3.3.6 Individual Interviews and Group Interviews**

A combination of individual interviews and group interviews were trialled successfully in the pilot phase of the study. Individual and group interviews took between thirty five and fifty minutes. The group interviews consisted of two or three students. Participants in the two pilot group interviews appreciated hearing the views of the other students. Other advantages of the group interviews were rich data, stimulating to participants and recall aiding (Fontana & Frey 1994: 365). As a consequence of the successful use of group interviews during piloting, they were expanded during the main phase of the study. After the initial eight individual interviews in the pilot phase, subsequent participants chose between individual and group interviews. In both schools students arranged for their participation to occur at a convenient time such as a period when they were did not have a timetabled lesson. This negotiation was undertaken by the researcher for one school and by the Year 11 Co-ordinator for the school where the researcher was unknown. No student raised any concern about participation in a group or individual interview.

During the process of data analysis responses from participants in individual and group interviews were assessed. This occurred while applying the constant comparative method and constructing categories of answers to questions. The aim was to evaluate whether participants' responses were influenced by the type of interview. The analysis found that there was no significant difference in the categories of students' responses or participation between individual interviews and group interviews. Participants reported enjoying discussing their views with their peers in group interviews. Others stated that they valued participation in the individual interview. The only difference noted was that group interviews

appeared to assist the recall of participants. All individual and group interviews were characterised by a willingness of participants to express their views in response to the questions. There was a continuity of data collected across both individual and group interviews held during the pilot and main phases of the study. Quotations from participants that are cited in the thesis are accompanied by the code that indicates the number and type of interview.

The term 'focus groups' is used frequently in qualitative inquiry, but the group interviews were not focus groups. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990: 10) contemporary focus groups involve 8 to 12 participants and between one and a half and two hours in length. Morgan (1997: 6) critiqued this view in favour of a more inclusive use of the term focus group. Morgan (1997: 6) concluded his review of understandings of focus groups by indicating that a more inclusive approach avoided definition and size debates; and enabled researchers to make a range of choices in research design that still fall within his concept of a focus group. However, his comparison of individual interviews and focus groups supported the view in this study that data collection from two or three students is an interview, not a focus group (Morgan 1997: 10-13).

### **3.3.7 Recording Interview Data**

Every individual and group interview was recorded on audio tape. As Patton (1990: 348) noted, taping serves to assist in data collection, data analysis and in promoting validity. Another reason for the audio taping of interviews was to record accurately the words used by the participants (Merriam, 1998: 88). Tape transcripts were checked and amended to ensure accuracy.

### **3.3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Fontana & Frey (1994: 372) outlined key ethical considerations for researchers: informed consent, right to privacy and protection from harm. These ethical issues were addressed before commencing data collection. Patton (1990: 354) advised that researchers should have resources available for referral if problems arose during a research interview. Procedures were put in place to safeguard the teenagers, the school and the researcher. Merriam (1998: 214) stated that participants in interview research could believe that their privacy is invaded. Measures were taken to protect anonymity and promote rapport. Open-ended interview

questions on a pre-approved schedule reduced the risks to participants. A summary of steps undertaken to ensure ethical research techniques is recorded in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Ethical procedures in place during the conduct of the study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University’s ethics committee approval was given before the commencement of data collection. This included approval of all methodological procedures and the schedule of interview questions used in both individual interviews and group interviews.</li> <li>• Parental and student approval were required before the participation of a student in an individual interview or group interview.</li> <li>• No former or current students of the researcher participated in the study.</li> <li>• The diocesan Catholic Education Office and the College principals granted approval for data collection.</li> <li>• Anonymity was protected by the use of pseudonyms in the thesis and any publications emanating from this research. Pseudonyms were used for names of students, teachers, schools and suburbs.</li> <li>• A protocol was developed to outline what action the researcher would take in ethically difficult situations. For example, it outlined what needed to occur if a student required counselling or if a student made a disclosure on an issue of sexual abuse.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected during interviews was taped and then transcribed in Microsoft Word. After the transcripts were checked and amended, responses were coded. The coding process involved allocating numbered text units to participants’ responses to facilitate the analysis of interview data. A pseudonym, individual interview or group interview number and a text unit number accompany quotations from participants appearing in the thesis.

The constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and used by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Maykut & Morehouse (1994) provided a structured method of qualitative data analysis. The constant comparative method is an established data analysis technique within the field of qualitative research. The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to examine the meaning of words and actions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 121).

Merriam (1998) described the constant comparative method as a process of comparing data and tentatively building categories containing similar units of data. Merriam (1998: 183-184) stated that categories need to be: exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitising, conceptually congruent and reflective of the purpose of the research. The steps in this process are explained by Maykut & Morehouse (1994: 135) and are summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Maykut & Morehouse (1994: 135) Constant Comparative Method of Data Analysis
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inductive category coding and simultaneous comparing of units of meaning across categories</li> <li>2. Refinement of categories</li> <li>3. Exploration of relationships and patterns across categories</li> <li>4. Integrating of data yielding an understanding of people and settings being studied</li> </ol>

The constant comparative method of data analysis was used in this study to refine categories or themes that represented participants' responses to questions. Strauss & Corbin (1990: 22) stated that it is important to reconstruct data in a manner that makes the participants' reality recognisable to a broader audience. This principle is an important feature of the presentation of data in Chapters 5 to 7. The report on the qualitative aspect of the study includes a range of examples of student responses for each theme or category. The actual words of participants were used to illustrate themes. Fontana & Frey (1994) described the importance of recording contradictory responses and these responses feature in the presentation of data.

The constant comparative method was used to develop inferences (Miles & Huberman 1994, Maykut & Morehouse 1994, Merriam 1998.). Maykut & Morehouse (1994) describe the purpose of this method as:

developing propositions: statements of fact inductively derived from a rigorous and systematic analysis of the data. (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 126)

The results of using the constant comparative method in this study include: the development of thematic categories for the reporting of participants' responses to questions, and the interpretation of interview data in a way that contributes to the understanding of teenage boys' perceptions.

### **3.5 Validity**

The issue of validity has attracted considerable attention in the field of qualitative research. Lincoln & Guba (1985), Eisenhart & Howe (1992), Maxwell (1992), Kvale (1996) and Merriam (1998) considered that validity refers to the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from research data. This understanding of validity is pertinent to this study. There are different models for assessing validity in qualitative research. Maxwell (1992) proposed a typology of five features: descriptive validity, interpretative validity, theoretical validity,

generalisability and evaluative validity. He argued that evaluative validity is not directly relevant in most qualitative research. This is the case in this study. However, the remaining four elements are relevant and will now be reviewed.

### **Descriptive Validity**

A primary concern of this study has been to establish descriptive validity. This means that the factual accuracy of the qualitative investigation has been protected. Individual and group interviews were audio taped. Transcripts were typed by either the researcher, or one of two other word processor operators. Every transcript was checked by the researcher against the audio tape recording and the written research notes. This resulted in numerous inaccuracies being corrected before the commencement of data analysis.

### **Interpretive Validity**

Qualitative research is not only concerned with providing a valid description, but aims to discover the meaning of the experience under investigation. Maxwell (1992) asserted that interpretive validity involves presenting research data in a way that represents the perspectives of the participants. Maxwell (1992: 289) stated: "Interpretive accounts are grounded in the language of the people studied and rely as much as possible on their own words and concepts". The constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) was employed in the study to report the participants' responses to questions thematically. This data analysis strategy was used to protect interpretive validity.

### **Theoretical Validity**

Maxwell (1992) proposed that theoretical validity involves a greater level of abstraction than descriptive or interpretive validity. It brings theoretical constructs to the analysis of the phenomena being researched. Theoretical validity goes beyond description and interpretation to offer explanation of the research data. This study addressed theoretical validity by evaluating the "vortices of masculinity" (Connell, 1996) and proposing explanations within the findings of the study.



## Generalisability

Generalisability refers to the extent to which a particular research account can be applied to other settings not directly investigated. Maxwell (1992) proposed that qualitative research satisfies generalisability when it contributes to theory development beyond the particular persons under study. Quantitative research is different because of the importance of sampling and statistical inference. This qualitative study intended to make a contribution to understanding the educational experiences of teenage boys. It provided new Australian data on this topic and noted issues in need of further research.

## 3.6 Reliability

Kvale (1996: 235) stated “reliability pertains to the consistency of the research findings”. Merriam (1998: 206) asserted “the question is ... whether the results are consistent with the data collected.” Both Kvale (1996) and Merriam (1998) listed measures that qualitative researchers take to ensure reliability. Table 3.6 lists measures taken to safeguard the reliability of this investigation.

Table 3.6: Steps taken to safeguard Reliability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researcher explained assumptions behind the genres of participant researcher, practitioner based enquiry or teacher as researcher (Merriam: 1998).</li><li>• Clear explanation of: schools studied, selection of participants and role of researcher (Merriam: 1998).</li><li>• Establishment of an “audit trail” (Merriam: 1998) that gave a description of data collection, data analysis and decision making.</li><li>• Interview reliability promoted by the use of a pre-approved schedule (Kvale: 1996).</li><li>• Explanation of the constant comparative method of data analysis (Kvale: 1996).</li></ul>

## 3.7 Summary

This chapter described the research methods used in the qualitative part of the study. It included a description of the research design, data collection, data analysis and a consideration of validity and reliability. The next three chapters describe and analyse the participants’ responses to questions in the individual and group interviews.

# Chapter 4

## Teenage Boys' Perceptions of Masculinity

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports and discusses data collected on teenage boys' perceptions of "being a man today" and on their understanding of masculinity. It shows their perceptions of different types of masculinity, and the range of perceived influences on their developing understanding of masculinity. Sections 4.2 to 4.5 report participants' answers to five interview questions. As noted in Chapter 3, Methodology, an important feature of this study is the reporting and analysis of the actual words and phrases used by the teenage boys to explain their understandings. The significance of the interview data and its relationship with the research literature will be interpreted in Section 4.6.

### 4.2 Perceptions of being a man today

Participants in the study were asked (Question 12), "What does it mean to be a man today?" The responses of the teenage boys are reported according to the recurring themes identified in the data by the researcher (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4). Each theme is explicated by quotations from the participants. Table 4.1 summarises participants' responses to Question 12.

Table 4.1 Responses to Question 12 What does it mean to be a man today?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Independent Men	10	26
Responsible Men	8	21
Traditional Men	6	15
Changing Identity of Men	5	13
Changing Attitudes about Emotional Expression	4	11
Changing Attitudes to Work, Women and Society	4	11
Other response	1	3
Total	38	100

## **4.2.1 Today's Men: Independent, Responsible and Traditional**

### **Independent Men**

Ten interviewees (26%) described men as independent. There is evidence from the interview data to support the view that this theme represents a combination of their perceptions of men and their own aspirations for themselves as adults in the future.

Someone who is himself. He can't be persuaded by other people. He can make up his own mind. He relates with other people well. (Sean, Gp 4, 88)

.... Don't let others influence you, or tell you what you should be looking like or you should lose weight or something like that. Mainly just listen to yourself. (Nicholas, Int 4, 30)

The independent man is both decisive and relational. He is his "own man basically" (Fritz, Int 10, 37). He is "someone who is himself" (Sean, Gp4, 88) and "they rise to the occasion when they need some authority" (Dale, Int 1, 32). Frequently, participants described independent men as having the ability and confidence to stand against popular opinion.

### **Responsible Men**

Eight participants (21%) described men in terms of responsibility.

Greater responsibilities. You are more individual, not relying on your parents or anyone to help you along ... like your own decisions and choices. (Kane, Gp 11, 89)

Responsibility. Taking care of your actions. (Samuel, Int 2, 30)

Participants spoke about the importance of responsibility when answering other interview questions. The role of responsibility will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### **Traditional Men**

Traditional images of men featured in the responses of six participants (15%).

There's still a strong presence of the old type of truism the man like the breadwinner, ... (It) is still very present. (Will, Gp 7, 91)

Being a man is more family orientated than what it used to be. You don't just work, come home, go to work the next day. .... (Kevin, Int 5, 30)

The teenage boys' involved in this study were conscious that new identities are emerging for men. They were aware of the multiple layers of expectations that were influencing their choices about being a young man. Other participants compared traditional and emerging understandings of being a man today. Social expectations of men's behaviour were seen as influenced by ethnicity. One participant described his perception that boys from southern European cultures are raised with different understandings of masculinity to their peers: "because the man is the one that runs the family" (Guy, Int 7, 30).

#### **4.2.2 Men are Changing**

Change was a recurring theme within the perceptions of the boys about being a man today. The perception expressed by thirteen students (35%) is that men today require a different outlook if they are to survive in a shifting world.

##### **Changing Identity of Men**

Five participants (13%) indicated that the identity of men was changing. Three of the teenage boys interviewed believed that the traditional stereotyped Australian man was no longer an adequate identity for men.

The image of the guy with the beer at the barbie. It's dying out. (Thomas, Gp 3, 231).

Participants reported that "the yobbo thing" (Matthew, Gp 1, 116) and "the woman at home and the man working" (Peter, Gp 4, 86) were now inaccurate.

##### **Changing Attitudes about Emotional Expression**

The young men who detected a change in the identity of men explained that new skills are required. Dimensions of change needed to involve both attitudes and behaviour. Four participants (11%) described the way men deal with their emotional lives. The rules for the expression of emotion seemed to be shifting.

....[It] doesn't mean that you have to break down and cry every five minutes but you need to be a bit more sensitive to be able to see things that previously you may have ignored.(Lance, Gp 11, 91)

Participants reported a new level of expectation upon men. In the past, they may have been able to ignore situations that demanded empathy and skills in communicating emotions. Boys in this study were aware that there are conflicting expectations regarding the ways that men and boys expressed feelings.

I think traditional views are still present. .... If you are hurt inside or somebody dies you not really allowed to cry, you're meant to be strong, you know the breadwinner, to be strongest one and has to protect the family. (Alex, Gp 7, 89)

Participants identified that women were pushing for greater emotional expression from men. Others viewed this change as associated with a more broad movement of both men and women within society. Regardless of the different perspectives on the stereotypical unemotional man, the boys in the study recognised the power of this image. They are confronted by the stereotype of the Australian, breadwinning man with his feelings under control. Participants reported competing expectations “you can show your emotions but in some cases, to be a man it's just not enough” (Will, Gp 7, 90). Boys are supposed to be able to express sensitivity, as well as display traditional male characteristics such as being decisive and dominant.

Group 7 reported a discussion with a sympathetic teacher on the rules governing emotional expression.

.... you can't explain it as to why we aren't allowed to cry or show any emotions, it is like an unwritten law that everyone knows. (Alex, Gp 7, 92)

The men who do show their emotions are seen as gay or sissies. (Will, Gp 7, 93)

Teenage boys are maturing at a time when more facility with emotional expression is expected of men. However, the boys themselves showed that they were acutely aware that they are caught between conflicting demands regarding how they express their feelings. It appears that while men have more latitude regarding the expression of emotion, teenage boys do not seem to be accorded much freedom to demonstrate many of their feelings.

Three participants discussed in individual interviews the significance of the Captain of the First Grade Rugby League team crying at the end of his Graduation. One account included this observation:

Because if the captain of the First Grade footballers can display emotions, and he would be seen as the most masculine of all the students, if he can display his emotions, like then anyone could! (Aidan, Int 3, 17)

This response is significant because it described the power of the prohibition on emotional expression reported by young men in the study. This statement also illustrated the status of football within the hierarchy of these students' masculinities. Rules governing the expression of emotion are mediated through ways including the behaviour of peer leaders.

### **Changing Attitudes to Work, Women and Society**

Four participants (11%) reported that men need changed attitudes towards work, women and society. Men need new values to be effective members of the community.

One reported the role of work in forging male identity. Another described that men could no longer dominate: "... men are not thinking that they are above everyone else" (Owen, Int 6, 30). A third participant stated that being a man today was more than size, muscles and physical power. He proposed that there is a new and emerging criterion for being a man: "... now I think it's more how you carry yourself amongst the community" (Ben, Gp 3, 227).

Anthony was convinced that men needed a different approach to work if they are to survive in the contemporary workplace.

I think being a man is much more about attitude today. You need a good attitude if you want to survive in the workplace. Especially as we are competing with girls now as well, and they have different attitudes and different work ethics and ideas. We don't dominate any more. You always used to hear that the boys were smart, and now the girls are really smart. And that's what you hear all the time. And you think, "How am I going to compete against these girls? They are some kind of super race!" (Anthony, Gp 3, 235)

Participants believed that men confronted a social and cultural environment that required new values, skills and attitudes. Women cannot be viewed as having a lower status. Men needed to become more communicative and more able to accommodate new expectations within the workforce.

## 4.3 Perceptions of Masculinity

Teenage boys participating in the study were asked (Question 13): “What does masculinity mean to you?”. Their responses will be reported in the following themes: acting as a man; society’s expectations; individual response; not feminine or emotional; and physical strength. One of the students interviewed said that he didn’t know what masculinity meant. Table 4.2 records the frequency of responses within each theme.

	Frequency	Percentage
Masculinity as acting as a man	12	32
Masculinity as society’s expectations	8	21
Masculinity as individual response	7	18
Masculinity in contrast to feminine and emotions	6	16
Masculinity as strength and muscularity	4	10
Do not know	1	3
Total	38	100

### **Masculinity as acting as a man**

Twelve (32%) of the participants in the study defined masculinity as being a man or acting in a masculine way. Some described masculinity with a simple statement.

.... Standards of men. (Damien, Gp 10, 125)

Other participants spoke about action and what men do. The response of Owen is representative of participants who view masculinity in this way:

The way a man would act. .... What men do... (Owen, Int 6, 32)

Some responses implied that masculinity is an automatic entitlement of being a man. One participant inferred that masculinity is both a process and a reward for enduring difficulties.

### **Masculinity as society’s expectations**

Eight interviewees (21%) indicated that masculinity was influenced by society’s expectations. Some viewed masculinity in terms of the symbols of success in a consumer society:

Nice fast car! When you leave school ... people view you like using certain symbols... like the certain symbols of masculinity like new car, new job. They sort of boost your image and make you feel bigger and stronger. Car, house, place to work, girlfriends. (Kane, Gp 11, 99.)

All responses in this theme stated that society has a role in the definition of masculinity. These participants defined the term masculinity with reference to “society”, “the public” or “other people”. One participant stated explicitly that social expectations acted as criteria for assessing masculinity.

.... You’ve got to meet this to be masculine. (Fritz, Int 10, 40)

Others combined social expectations with a more individual understanding of masculinity.

### **Masculinity as individual response**

A third strand of seven responses (18%) included those who stated that masculinity was defined uniquely by each individual man. Some participants perceived masculinity as being a completely individual response:

... Each person has their own different masculinity. (Kevin, Int 5, 32)

Participants gave reasons for this individual view on masculinity. Typically, they describe the role of personal choice or personality.

.... But I think like these days, it’s like everyone’s interpretation is their own. It’s like not one set way to be a man. (Peter, Gp 4, 91).

Some commented on the twin roles of the peer group and the individual in defining masculinity:

I think it is a mixture of being one of the boys and .... achieving your own ideals. (Anthony, Gp 3, 248)

Rules governing emotional expression featured in discussions on individual understandings of masculinity. This was a feature of other responses and is reported in the next theme.

### **Masculinity in contrast to feminine and emotions**

Six responses (16%) described the separation of masculinity from the expression of feelings and femininity. The following responses are representative:



Like being a man, as compared with being feminine, like you're tough and you're strong and you're the one that can brush your problems aside and not crack under pressure and have a big cry ... (Ben, Gp 3, 249-264)

Just to not show that much emotion. Just be manly. (John, Gp 5, 171)

Traditional notions of masculinity involved brushing problems aside. Participants from St Mark's College recalled the visit of a guest speaker to the school who said that it is okay for men to cry. However responses to this question illustrated the conflicting messages about crying experienced by the boys. The open display of emotions risked being labelled: "feminine", "cry baby", or "pansy".

Masculinity was defined in direct comparison to being feminine. Some participants examined the qualities of men and women when they explained masculinity. One participant described that masculinity involves being different to women and feminine qualities such as kindness:

.... You can be a good person, nice, kind, but they are feminine qualities.... You have to be separate from the female species I think. It sounds stupid. You have to have that bit of get up an go, the ability to psych yourself up and be a bit of a man sometimes. (Dale, Int 1, 34)

### **Masculinity as strength and muscles**

Four (10%) participant responses described masculinity as physical strength or muscular development. The following responses are indicative:

The strongest and the biggest, the best. (Marco, Int 9, 62)

To me just the physical aspects of it. Just the muscles.... (Matthew, Gp 1, 120)

Teenage boys may not use the term masculinity. One teenage boy, Fred Gp 10, said he had no idea of what was meant by masculinity. However, all the other participants were able to share their understanding of masculinity. The next section of the data outlines how the teenage boys in the study responded to the question about types of masculinity.

## **4.4 Perceptions of types of masculinity**

Participants were asked Question 14: "Are there different types of masculinity? If yes, describe them." Only one of the teenage boys in the study (Marco, Int 9, 65) indicated that

there is only one type of masculinity. The other thirty seven participants described their understanding of different types of masculinity.

	Frequency	Percentage
Two types of masculinity	13	34
Many types of masculinity	14	37
Level or stages of masculinity	6	16
One type of masculinity	1	3
Other	4	10
Total	38	100

The pattern of responses to this question is arranged in three sections. The first section contains the comments of boys who perceived two types of masculinity; the second section describes the responses of those who stated that there are multiple types of masculinity; and the third section are answers that identified levels or stages of masculinity.

### **Two types of masculinity**

Thirteen (34%) of the teenage boys in the study identified two types of masculinity. They are reported in three groups: physical and muscular images; power images; and unrelated images.

The physical and muscular images of masculinity described in Section 4.3 continued to feature in participants' descriptions of types of masculinity. Seven of the thirteen teenage boys who perceived two types of masculinity used physical or muscular images to describe at least one of their types.

When you hear masculinity you think of this guy with muscles he is all tough, but then you think about it, it means being a gentleman as well. (Tomas, Gp 1, 125)

Like the big boofy guy will be confident because he is big and like the academic will be confident because he's smart. .... So it's like kind of two different types. (Anthony, Gp 3, 266)

Two of the thirty eight participants spoke of two types of masculinity using language indicating power. Both participants appeared to prefer their alternative image to one based on power or control images of masculinity.

There's one where you're basically the king of everything. You own this and you tell your wife what to do, and that's not really the right one, I think. And the other one is where you share everything in a relationship with men or women. (Nathan, Gp 5, 174)

One could be the one who has to be always in control. Never listens to anyone. Only if it has got to do with them and how good they are. Another one could be .... just listening to yourself. (Nicholas, Int 4, 34)

A third group of responses, five in all, referred to two types of masculinity but they are otherwise unrelated and are not connected by a common theme.

### **Many types of masculinity**

Fourteen (37%) of the participants expressed the view that there are many different types of masculinity. Participants used choice, personality, age and occupation to explain the different types of masculinities. This response described the contribution of occupation:

I think there are many different types. You see so many older people who act so differently in society, so there is no one set way to become a man. Everyone goes through their own experiences. Like you see some men like bricklayers who are big and menacing, then you see another guy who is lawyer, like there are different types of society. (Sean, Gp 4, 94)

Several participants discussed the role of the individual in adopting one of the many types of masculinity.

Everyone has their own individual perspective on what masculinity is, like one person might see it like being responsible and committed, another might see it as showing no emotions and macho image. (Alex, Gp 7, 104)

Teenage boys who identified the existence of different types of masculinities attempted to describe them. Most were able to give a clear description of characteristics. For example, one participant stated that attitudes were significant:

You've got guys who are quiet. You have guys who are loud. It is attitude based. (Owen, Int 6, 34)

Patrick (Gp 6) described his perception of different types of masculinities:

You've got the softer type of person, like whether that be the emotional sort of person, or just the person who doesn't get much involved in the manly sort of things like sport. Then ... it goes right through up to the big macho person, ... you can be anything in between. (Patrick, Gp 6, 93)

This response contained several important features. Patrick indicated that there are many types of masculinity and there is a hierarchy or gradation of masculinities. He asserted that there is a continuum that has the “big macho person” at one end of the scale. This is closely related to concept of levels and stages of masculinity.

### **Levels and stages of masculinity**

Six participants (16%) gave answers that indicated a perception that a masculinity typology exists in levels or stages. This is an example of a response indicating that there are levels:

Different levels of masculinity that one chooses. (Keith, Gp 6, 94)

Other participants proposed that masculinity could be segmented into stages:

Agree, different stages, where you become more of a man, more responsible, more mature with things, as you gradually get older you learn and become more masculine. (Mauro, Gp 9, 99)

These responses indicated that masculinity is based on developmental stages on a linear path from youth to mature manhood. This discussion is a different understanding to the majority of the participants who stated that there are two or more types of masculinity adopted by adult men.

## **4.5 Perceptions of Influences on Understanding of Masculinity**

Teenage boys’ participating in the study were asked (Question 15): “What has influenced your understanding of masculinity? Please try to identify them?”

### **Identifying Perceptions of Influences on Understanding of Masculinity**

The teenage boys in the study frequently perceived that many factors influenced their understanding of masculinity. The responses of two participants are examples of the influences nominated by the students.

Parents. School. Friends. (Samuel, Int 2, 36)

Family, friends, mostly your peers I'd say. Teachers do as well. Majority of time it would be family and close friends. (Kristoff, Gp 9, 100)

The thirty eight participants were asked what they perceived as influencing their understanding of masculinity. One participant responded that he didn't know. The other thirty seven participants nominated from one to seven influences. Table 4.4 represents the frequency with which participants identified factors in their response to the question.

Influence as nominated by participants	Frequency this influence is nominated	Percentage of participants who nominated this influence
Family	28	74
School, Teachers	21	55
Friends, Peers	15	39
Media	8	21
Heroes, Sport & Media Stars	6	16
Experiences, Activities, Sport	5	13
People	4	11
Puberty	3	8
Don't Know	1	3
Total	91	Not Applicable

The participants in this study stated that they perceived family (74%), school and teachers (55%), as well as friends and peers (39%), as influences on their understanding of masculinity.

### **Family**

Twenty eight participants (74%) nominated their families as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. Table 4.5 provides a summary of family members as named by the teenage boys in response to Question 15. Some nominated "family", others named particular family members, such as "family...Dad...parents" (Yunis, Gp9, 102).

Table 4.5 Summary of perceived influences as nominated by participants in answer to Question 15 that relate to family.		
	Frequency that this word is nominated by participants	Percentage of family responses
Dad, Father	14	29
Family	10	21
Parents	8	16
Brother, Brothers	6	12
Mum, Mother	4	8
Uncle, Uncles	3	6
Other family members (Grandfather, cousins, sister, aunts)	4	8
Total	49	100

The following statements are representative of participants who reported the importance of several members of their families:

Friends, sometimes your parents - family in general, cousins, aunts, uncles, brother. (John, Gp 5, 182)

Yes I'd have to say Mum, Dad and my brother and my big sister. (Joel, Gp 2, 130)

Twenty six (53%) of the family influences nominated were parents, mothers and fathers. Several participants described the contribution of both their father and mother. One associated his driving lessons with a broader discussion of how he viewed his father as a role model. He reported that his mother was only prepared to accompany him on quiet streets and his father's role was to teach him driving in highway traffic. Another participant highlighted the significance of his mother to his developing understanding of masculinity:

My mother, has given me ideas about how to be a man, what you should be like with a wife. (Scott, Int 8, 73)

The teenage boys' interviewed in this study frequently referred to the importance of their fathers as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. "Dad" or "Father" received fourteen mentions and this does not include the eight references to "Parents". In comparison "Teachers" were nominated on eight occasions by participants in response to Question 15. Some participants were particularly conscious of the role played by their father. Graham stated that he has learnt to seek to be a success from his father.

My Dad has influenced me, he has helped me shape to who I want to be. .... He has always been successful so he always wants me to succeed. I would say my Dad has

played a very big role in my life to my understanding of what masculinity is.  
(Graham, Gp 2, 129)

Several participants were able to analyse the relative importance of their fathers and school as an influence on understandings of masculinity. This participant explained that his father was more influential:

I would have to say my Dad. .... You might say, "Yeah, Dad's a good bloke, I want to end up like him, successful, family, ...." Like he is around you from a very early age, so he's the one that sets the standard from the start. (Thomas, Gp 3, 329)

Answers from participants described that the influence of fathers was associated with sport:

I think it's been all my family like my brother and my Dad showing me the more masculine side, by putting me into sports like cricket and rugby league. ... (Keith, Gp 6, 99)

Male relatives including brothers, uncles and a grandfather made an important contribution to understanding of masculinity. Participants nominated them on ten occasions (20% family influences nominated). Here are two different examples of the influential male relatives.

My brother is 27. I still remember him living at home with us and I remember his first car was a Torana with all the paint and all gear on it ... I'd watch him come home and he was jumping around and all because he had got his apprenticeship... He was just going through life. He moved out I remember going to see his first apartment. ... I remember feeling ... that ... this is what I want to do, exactly like this when I get that old. (Kane, Gp 11, 101)

Not really at school, my grandfather he has influenced me. We go to restaurants every time we go up there. He says to pull the chair out for my mum, my nan. .... Open the door for ladies. .... The old fashioned way. (Nicholas, Int 4, 38)

Family members were the most frequently named influence on the participants' understanding of masculinity. The teenage boys responded to Question 15 using both general statements and specific examples to explain why they perceived family members to be a significant influence.

### **School and teachers**

School and teachers were nominated by twenty one participants (55%) as influencing their understanding of masculinity. This does not include specific references to friends or peer groups. While it is clear that the influence of school and peers are closely connected, each will be discussed separately.

“School” was named on thirteen occasions and “teachers” were nominated eight times by participants in their answers to Question 15. Some participants nominated school as one of several influences that includes parents and friends.

Parents definitely. They'd be number one. Mainly because I am living with them all the time. I go on holidays with them. The next one would probably be teachers, on a hierarchy sort of thing. ...Once again you are there every day. The teacher just doesn't come in and teach you. .... (Kevin, Int 5, 36)

This section of the chapter reports the participants' views on the range of masculinity influences that they have named. The perceived influence of teachers and school experiences will be described, in detail, in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **Friends and peers**

Fifteen participants (39%) nominated friends and peers as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. Some spoke directly about the importance of peers, for example:

Probably mostly peer pressure and friends. (John, Gp 5, 178)

Others described the role of peers in providing feedback and advice. Two of these teenage boys referred to the contribution of teenage girls as an influence on their understanding of masculinity.

When you have a problem, it's like someone different. You talk to blokes, if you have a problem, or you talk to your friends. You can talk to your friends, to a female, just to get a different aspect. It is sometimes better. (Thomas, Gp 3, 312)

It may be that the participants' views on their female peers is influenced by their education in a single sex student environment. The role of friends and peers in school is described in Chapter 5.

### **Media, Heroes, Sporting and Movie Stars**

Eight participants (21%) said that the media influenced their understanding of masculinity. Six participants (16%) nominated sporting and media stars as influential. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the role of the media.



Arnold Swartzenegger and Sylvester Stallone were the most frequently named individuals by participants in this study. Some participants connected television and movies with actors who provide particular images of masculinity.

TV I'd say, that would be the biggest one.... with the sport....the action movies, try to be as masculine people you see on TV like Arnold Swartzenegger and Sylvester Stallone. (Marco, Int 9, 68-69)

TV, a bit, movies, magazines. Arnold Swartzenegger. You see Rambo and think that is what a real man is, blows up people ... And then you watch the news and you hear about all these heroes that save people ... and then you think no, that's sort of the real man. A more real life version of a man, not like Hollywood. (Peter, Gp 4, 98)

Frequently participants described Arnold Swartzenegger and Sylvester Stallone as Hollywood or television creations. However, one interviewee spoke of Sylvester Stallone as his idol:

I also think my idols.... It might sound stupid, but Sylvester Stallone is one of my idols, I like Rocky. .... It is said in Rocky many times "Eye the tiger", keep it on the ball, keep fighting and even though you are down you've always got a chance I look at it like that. A lot of idols out there have helped me. (Joel, Gp 2, 132)

Several participants were critical of the role of the media in promoting achievement in sport. The following response demonstrates an awareness of gender equity:

.... Images of men that they put forward, like the World Cup cricket heroes. They get ticker tape parades ... and the women's hockey team - they have been like the champions for six years, and nothing! (Anthony, Gp 3, 321)

Two group interviews demonstrated the capacity of the participants to analyse the role of the media as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. Two responses from the first interview include explanations of how teenage boys' process media images of masculinity.

Well I don't watch it and then hit the gym or something. ... I look at one of those blokes and I think I wouldn't mind having a body like that! ... But it does sort of influence me to go work out, go for a run, to pick up my act and stop bludging. (Fred, Gp 10, 154)

You do see people like Soccer players where you think they've got the perfect life and you think I wish I was like that. But then again you think to yourself, I'm not going to be like him, it is not going to come, well I'd better come back down to earth, I am here by myself. (Damien, Gp 10, 156)

Participants in a second group interview were critical of the media and the unrealistic images of masculinity portrayed. There was a sufficient level of trust in the group for all three

participants to state the personal impact of media model images of masculinity. Two quotes report part of an extended discussion on the negative influence of the media.

.... images of masculinity like the perfect male role model, like 6 foot 2, he's got muscles, he is built, he is loving, understanding and everything. It's really not how he is. It's like the image of a perfect woman ... thin. It's not true. (Gavin, Gp 7, 109)

.... you don't think you live up to it, it sort of puts you down ... I can't lift like 400 pound weights like a man, if you don't see yourself as a man it takes away like your self esteem. (William, Gp 7, 111)

The participants who stated that the media was an influence on their understanding of masculinity were able to outline reasons for their perceptions. There is evidence that the teenage boys in the study were critical of the role played by the media in promoting unrealistic images of masculinity. Participants were aware of the connections between sport, media, movie stars and masculinity.

#### **Other influences: experiences, activities, sport, people and puberty**

The final broad group of influences nominated by the teenage boys in the study refers to a range of life experiences. Several participants expressed a broad view:

Yes, it's just everything, I mean, experiences, people you're around, friends, family, teachers... You could just be walking down the street and something happens that could affect you. .... (Alex, Gp 7, 110)

Another participant recognised the formative influence of experiences that are associated with acceptable behaviour for men.

.... like play football .... the things that you do that are viewed by other people as masculine. (Kane, Gp 11, 103)

Simon described the importance of his experience of playing soccer with young men.

I think the main thing would be through soccer. At age of 15 I was picked for Reserve Grade for the National Soccer League .... and players in there were all 18 & 19. I was the youngest boy they had ever recruited for that team through the whole club. The way I had to .... present myself could not be like a 15 year old - I had to be like an 18 year old.... I had to try and put myself over as an older man. (Simon, Gp 8, 170)

One group interview described the experience of puberty as an influence on participants' understanding of masculinity. Analysis of the discussion indicated that puberty was influential because it was a time of enhanced muscular development.

I think going through puberty really did it because I used to be chubby and short, but like in the last five years I have sort of grown up and lost a lot of weight, grown taller, and put on a lot more muscle. (Matthew, Gp 1, 137)

### **Summary**

Teenage boys who participated in this study nominated a variety of influences on their understanding of masculinity. Family, parents and fathers were the most nominated influence while school and teachers receive the second highest number of mentions. Participants were able to describe the contributions of multiple factors to their understanding of masculinity. This will be addressed in the next section of the chapter.

## **4.6 Discussion of teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity**

Participants' answers to the Questions 12 to 15 and related literature will be discussed using five themes: being a man today, understanding masculinity, expressing emotions, multiple masculinities, and influencing masculinity.

### **4.6.1 Being a man today**

#### **Hegemonic Masculinity**

Participants' responses to questions about being a man today and the meaning of masculinity are consistent with some implied understanding of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) developed and Connell (1995, 1996, 2000) has promoted hegemonic masculinity as a way of understanding masculine identity. Chapter 2 section 2.2.1 reviewed hegemonic masculinity citing Phoenix and Frosh (2001) and concluded that the concept has wide research usage despite some limitations. Connell (1995, 1996, 2000) proposed that hegemonic masculinity is dynamic, multilayered, dominant and is expressed differently in each culture.

The answers of the teenage boys to Question 12: “What does it mean to be a man today?” included twenty four responses (62%) where men were categorised as independent, responsible and traditional. An examination of responses indicates that the descriptions could accurately be described as hegemonic masculinity. Words such as “*strong*”, “*authority*”, “*powerful*” were used along with phrases like “*rise to the occasion*”, “*take action*” and “*his own man*”. There is recognition within the literature that a nuanced understanding of the concept is useful when interpreting masculinities in diverse cultural settings (Connell, 1995, 1996, 2000; Phoenix and Frosh, 2001; Edley and Wetherell, 1995; Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1995.). The three categories of men as independent, responsible and traditional are legitimate expressions of dynamic, dominant and multilayered hegemonic masculinity.

There was evidence of hegemonic understandings of masculinities within responses to the full range of questions. Participants’ answers to Question 14, inquiring about different types of masculinities, resulted in some descriptions of hegemonic masculinity such as the following:

A lot of people like to be a big person and to lead the group and to think he has got the most muscles and bench press the most. (Joel, Gp 2, 123)

There is evidence from participants’ responses to support the assertion of Connell (2000), Phoenix and Frosh (2001) that plural understandings of hegemonic masculinity exist. There will be further consideration of the concept in subsequent parts of this chapter.

The traditional stereotyped images of the Australian man were present in participants’ answers. The boys acknowledged their power and many believed that these stereotypes are under challenge. The teenage boys interviewed described negotiating conflicting messages about masculine behaviour. This is particularly obvious when considering how to respond to their more vulnerable emotions.

### **Men and changing expectations**

Whilst approximately two thirds of the responses to Question 12 described hegemonic masculinity, one third said that men were changing. Thirteen participants (35%) thought that men were changing and needed to develop new attitudes for contemporary society. Men need to be adaptable, responsible, relational, and friendly. Strength comes not from

domination of women but from self knowledge and practical wisdom. Men today are expected to be more competent in dealing with emotions.

These responses are consistent with findings in the literature that some teenage boys believe hegemonic masculinity is changing. Laberge and Albert (1999: 252) found that approximately 25% of the boys in their study “communicated transformative views about hegemonic masculinity”. They reported differences across three social classes but viewed evidence of changed expectations in each group. Some features of the transformative views on masculinity included: capacity for intimate relationships with others, particularly women; emotional expressivity and concern for family life. Laberge and Albert (1999) proposed alternative explanations for these masculine identities. They indicated it might be a genuine shift in teenage boys’ expectations of being a man, but concluded it is unlikely to be the beginning of counterhegemonic movement in attitudes.

There is evidence from participants’ responses that a new form of hegemonic masculinity may be developing. It is acknowledged that this exploratory study involves a limited number of senior students from two middle class Catholic boys’ schools but participants reported qualities they perceived men need to be successful in society today. Table 4.6 proposes some features of the changed identity Australian men need to embrace.

Table 4.6 Perceptions of men and change emerging from participants’ responses.	
1.	Traditional stereotyped images of Australian men are no longer accurate due to changes in employment, family life and the rise of feminism.
2.	There are increased community expectations that men be attentive, empathetic and adept at expressing a range of emotions.
3.	Women are perceived as promoting changed expectations and some men are viewed as resistant.
4.	The ‘Sensitive New Age Guy’ is viewed as a caricature. Men need the ability to act, lead, follow and communicate.
5.	The workplace is an environment where men need to embrace new values of power sharing, communication and collaboration if they are to survive.

There is an opportunity for further research to investigate teenage boys’ beliefs about the need for men to change to meet the demands of contemporary society. The perception of changing expectations on men also features when analysing their understandings of masculinity and emotional expression.

## **4.6.2 Understanding masculinity**

### **Teenage boys can define masculinity**

Chapter 2 Section 2.2 synthesised the main perspectives on the use of the terms masculinity and masculinities within the literature. It was proposed that masculinity was the more appropriate word to use in interviews with teenage boys, and, consequently, the term masculinity was used extensively within the interview schedule. Question 13 asked participants: “What do you understand masculinity to mean?” Thirty seven of the thirty eight boys interviewed were able to answer the question giving a clear description of their perception of masculinity. Hearn (1996) and MacInnes (1998) proposed that the term masculinity is no longer useful and should be replaced. However, virtually all the boys interviewed were able to interpret and describe their understanding of masculinity. Evidence from this study indicates that the term masculinity can be useful when investigating the beliefs of teenage boys.

Chapter 2 Section 2.2.1 presented a synthesis of six perspectives on masculinity as proposed by Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996). Table 2.3 provided a summary of the six perspectives. Participants’ responses to Q 14 were analysed and categorised into five themes. Four of the five themes can be connected to four of the perspectives on masculinity proposed by Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996). Table 4.7 indicates where the typologies on masculinity show some correspondence. The range of views of the participants on masculinity is similar to the variety of theoretical perspectives on masculinity as identified by Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996). There is insufficient data to make conclusive comments about this comparison. It is noted that participants’ views of masculinity as individual responses may be related to Edley and Wetherell’s psychological perspective. Teenage boys may lack the familiarity with the language of psychology to articulate this more conclusively.

Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996)	Participants
Biological: masculinity is an expression of biological, physical and genetic forces.	Masculinity viewed as strength and muscles.
Psychological: masculinity is a product of the emotional life of men.	(no corresponding theme of responses)
Learning the male sex role	Masculinity as acting as a man
Masculinity and social relations	Masculinity as society's expectations
Cultural perspective on men	Masculinity in contrast to feminine and emotions
Feminism and the critique of masculinity	(no corresponding theme of responses)
(no corresponding perspective)	Masculinity as individual response

### **Diverse understandings of masculinity**

There was significant diversity within the participants' responses when they explained their understanding of masculinity. This provides support for the view of Salisbury and Jackson (1996) that masculine identities are not harmoniously integrated but are multi-faceted.

Participants' comments indicate a range of critical awareness of the contribution of biology, individual choice and social expectations to contemporary masculinity. Many of the teenage boys interviewed gave an uncritical description of a hegemonic understanding of masculinity. However, eight responses (19%) indicated that masculinity is an individual response and that men exercise some choice between masculinities. This view expressed by a minority of boys contradicts Connell (1996: 209) who indicated that "masculinities do not sit side-by-side like dishes in a smorgasbord". Connell (1989) proposed that these choices are not free and are heavily influenced by understandings of power. There is scope for further research on whether teenage boys perceive that masculinity is a matter for their individual choice or something to be determined by others.

### **4.6.3 Expressing emotions**

An important feature of answers to the questions reported in Chapter 4 was the expression of emotion. Four participants (11%) responded to Question 12 and stated that men need to be able to express their feelings. Six respondents (16%) to Question 13 said that masculinity was opposite to being feminine or emotional. Answers to Question 14 on types of masculinity included references to emotional expression when describing masculinities. The significance of emotional expression within the interview data and the literature will be

discussed in the following sequence: first, constraints on emotional expression; second, fear of being marginalised; third, need for emotional health and honesty.

### **Constraints on emotional expression**

There is evidence from the responses of the participants to indicate that they feel unwilling to express emotions that show vulnerability. The following comment reports some of the difficulties facing teenage boys in dealing with the conflicting demands of emotion and maintaining a masculine image with peers.

It depends on the group you're in. But in any group, you don't want to be the cry baby of the group. "Don't do that because he will go off and have a tear." You've got to be able to cop it on the chin like a man. (Anthony, Gp 3, 264)

Chapter 2 reviewed the findings of Pollack (1998), West (1996) and Browne (1995). There is evidence of what Pollack describes as the "Boy Code" operating. The responses of participants support the claim of West that boys are instructed to be 'tough' and the finding of Browne that boys are concerned about being seen as vulnerable.

There are indications from the interview data that participants believe they are constrained from expressing emotional vulnerability. None of the questions on the interview schedule sought to investigate detailed information on emotional expression and masculinity. However, this theme did recur and will be discussed in subsequent chapters. It is important to state at this point that some participants described experiencing a lack of freedom of emotional expression, an experience that is well documented in the literature of masculinities.

### **Fear of being marginalised**

Mac An Ghail (1994) proposed that interconnected elements of school culture: compulsory heterosexuality, misogyny and homophobia, contributed to teenage boys' fears of being marginalised if they express emotional vulnerability. Connell (1996) claimed that homosexual masculinities are actively dishonoured in modern Western culture. He described patterns of emotion associated with schools including the prohibition on including homosexuality within accepted definitions of masculinity.



Analysis of the literature and the answers of the participants demonstrate that teenage boys fear being marginalised if they cry or express vulnerable emotions. There is some limited evidence from participants' responses that fear of being labelled homosexual contributes to their anxiety about emotional expression. The responses of participants are in accordance with the findings of Mac An Ghaill (1994) and Connell (1996) that heterosexuality is regarded as normative and homosexual masculinities are marginalised. But significantly, homophobia or any negative ideas about inverse relationships between homosexuality and masculinity did not figure prominently in any of the research data. There were very few references by participants to homosexuality, even though researchers like Mac An Ghaill (1994) found that sexuality was a factor related to student masculinities. This is an area for further research but was not central to the aims of this study.

### **Need for emotional health and honesty**

The findings of this study illustrate the need for schools to promote the emotional health of teenage boys. This view corresponds to the recommendations of other research. Reichert (2001) described the value of emotional literacy as part of a gender equity program in a case study boys' school in Pennsylvania. The boys in his study reported that a small group initiative involving peer support and emotional openness resulted in new social practices within the school. Gurian (1999) promoted the concept of emotional integrity as way of describing how teenage boys can respond positively to competing expectations regarding emotional expression.

Martino (2001) and Salisbury and Jackson (1996) are prominent amongst the researchers who have argued that schools need to address the emotional health and wellbeing of teenage boys. Martino (2001) described the need for teenage boys to examine critically understandings of masculinity that connect emotional expression, sexism and homophobia. Salisbury and Jackson (1996) described reasons why boys are estranged from aspects of social and emotional expression. They outlined how emotional health and honesty can be incorporated into a broader anti-sexist curriculum for teenage boys. The role of school and emotional expression will be addressed in chapters 6 and 7.

#### **4.6.4 Multiple masculinities**

##### **Teenage boys perceive multiple masculinities**

An important feature of the interview responses to Question 14 is the clear perception of the participants that there are many types of masculinity. Thirty seven out of the thirty eight boys (97%) in the study believed that there were different types of masculinity. Thirty three participants (87%) gave answers describing their perceptions of masculinity typologies. Section 4.4 and Table 4.3 reported student perceptions grouped in three themes. They were: two types of masculinity; many types; and levels or stages of masculinity. Thirteen (34%) stated that there were two types of masculinity. The language of physical and social power was frequently used to describe masculinity. Fourteen (37%) said that there were many types of masculinity. They can be based on attitude, behaviour, power, occupation and individual differences. Six (16%) expressed the view that there are levels or stages of masculinity. Levels of masculinity were related to individual choice. Stages of masculinity were perceived as developmental.

There is widespread support within the literature applying the concept of multiple masculinities to teenage boys (Connell 1989, 1995, 1996, 2000; Phoenix and Frosh, 2001; Laberge and Albert, 1999; Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1995; Martino, 2001; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). Many of these studies are pertinent to the discussion sections of chapters 5 and 6.

##### **Multiple masculinities are influenced by hegemonic understandings of masculinity**

Laberge and Albert (1999) used Connell's concepts of reproduction, resistance and transformation to analyse the teenage boys' understanding of hegemonic masculinity. They found that reproductive hegemonic understandings were dominant throughout each of the three social class groups. Resistant and transformative understandings of masculinity were in the minority. They reported that boys in upper, middle and working class schools expressed each type of masculinity somewhat differently.

Participants' answers to Question 14 frequently included references to power, muscles, strength and control. They indicated that the hegemonic understandings of masculinity reported by Connell (1989, 1995, 1996 and 2000), Laberge and Albert (1999) and Phoenix

and Frosh (2001) featured when participants described their perceptions of types of masculinity. Laberge and Albert (1999) reported hegemonic understandings across social classes. The current study found language describing hegemonic masculinity used in all three typologies describing types of masculinity. This acknowledges the significant influence of hegemonic understandings of masculinity on teenage boys' perceptions.

#### **4.6.5 Influencing masculinity**

Participants in this study were able to describe what they perceived as influences on their understanding of masculinity. Thirty seven teenage boys (97%) named between one and seven factors. Only one participant (3%) was unable to name an influence. Two factors reported in Section 4.5 will be discussed in this chapter: family and media. Two other factors: school, teachers; and friends, peers will feature in Chapters 5 and 6.

##### **Family**

Twenty eight participants (74%) believed that their families were influential on their sense of masculinity. Teenage boys interviewed regarded their fathers as a primary source of guidance in masculinity. Parents, both fathers and mothers, along with other family members like brothers and uncles were named as reference points for teenage boys learning about what it means to be a man today.

West (2002), Pease (2002), Gurian (1999), Kindlon and Thompson (1999), Pollack (1998), Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) and Connell (1989) have argued that the family exerts a significant influence on teenage boys' understanding of masculinity. Participants' responses to Question 15 presented in Section 4.5 confirmed the important role played by families. Its significance in both the literature and qualitative components of this study is noted. There is a need for schools to recognise the central place of families when designing any educational program to enhance teenage boys' understandings of masculinity.

##### **Media**

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the pressure exerted by the media stereotypes of men. Some teenage boys in the study appeared willing to critique the widespread use of photographic images of male models in advertising. Interviewees' responses may be related

to teenage boys' sensitivity regarding body image reported by Grogan and Richards (2002). While this was not stated explicitly, the relationship between media, body image and perceptions of masculinity is an area in need of further research. There are indications that teenage boys are critical of media images of men.

It also sets a standard which most people can't achieve, it's a fake standard. (Alex, Gp 7, 111)

.... it does put you down a bit if you don't measure up ... (William, Gp 7, 111)

Movie heroes Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Swartzenegger were the most frequently named individuals in the study. Participants used these actors as readily accessible cultural reference points that embody toughness and hegemonic masculinity.

## **4.7 Summary**

This chapter presented the data collected from the participants' responses to five questions. The teenage boys in this study were asked to explain: their perceptions of being a man today; and their understanding of masculinity. Participants identified what they believed influenced their perceptions of masculinity. Participants' responses were reviewed thematically then analysed in relationship with key studies reported in the literature. The conclusions of this study regarding the participants' perceptions of masculinity will be proposed in Chapter 7. The next Chapter will report and discuss the participants' views on the role of teachers in their understanding of masculinity.

## Chapter 5

# Teenage Boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers on their understanding of masculinity

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports and discusses teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers on their understanding of masculinity and on the messages about masculinity, either direct or implied, that came from teachers. Questions 1 to 5 asked the participating students to consider the influence of teachers on their understanding of masculinity. Question 16 asked whether there were good role models for masculinity at school. Chapter 3 detailed the methodology of the qualitative investigation involving the analysis of the actual words and phrases of participants' responses. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to categorise responses into recurring themes. Sections 5.2 to 5.4 reports the data and Section 5.5 discusses the results in the light of the literature reviewed in chapter 2.

### 5.2 Perceptions of the influence of teachers on students' understanding of masculinity

#### 5.2.1 Teenage boys' recollections of teachers and masculine identity

Every group and individual interview commenced with Question 1 "Can you tell the story of an experience or an event where a teacher said or did something that made you think about what it means to be a man? If yes, please describe what happened." The interview schedule was designed to commence with a question that enabled the participants to reflect on their experience in response to a broad question on the area being investigated.

Twenty five interviewees (66%) were able to recount a story in response to this initial question. Participants' responses recalling experiences of teachers were analysed and categorised into four themes: **maturity**, **responsibility**, **strength** and **teacher student relationships**, which will be explained below. There three other responses unrelated to any of these themes. Many of the participants' perceptions of teachers given in the response to question 1 were also evident in their responses to later questions.

## **Maturity and being a man**

Eight participants (21%) reported experiences where they were urged to be mature and act in a manly way. Frequently, teachers spoke to students about maturity when they were trying to initiate improvements in behaviour.

“Wake up to yourself, you're a man now. You are at that age where you should be more mature, you should act more like an adult.” (Graham, Gp 2, 2)

Participants reported being exhorted to “*act your age*”, “*grow up*”. This was viewed as an attempt to get students to co-operate. Individuals and groups of students were told: “*If you're a man you'll own up*”. Participants expressed the view that teachers expected Year 11 students to act more maturely than younger boys.

Some of the comments by teachers about maturity had wider relevance beyond enforcing acceptable behaviour in the classroom. Mr Carter's reported comment: “*if you hit a woman, you are not really a man*” was given in answers to Question 1 and was quoted by participants in response to a range of questions during the interviews. The aphorism of the St Mark's College Year 10 Co-ordinator, Mr Connor: “*be your own man*” was recalled by many students. Participants reported he used this expression in Year Meetings to encourage students to grow up and to prepare to be senior students. The following extract gives one student's assessment of its repeated use.

.... It just made me think 'Is this making me a man' or 'Is this the way I want to turn out?' I think a majority really dismissed it at first as just another crazy saying by a teacher, but I think, most boys, after it got mentioned a lot really started to understand what it meant and where Mr Connor was coming from. (Fritz, Int 10, 3)

## **Responsibility**

Six (16%) of the participants recounted experiences that involved teachers telling teenage boys about being responsible.

Teachers have been saying lately it is your HSC, you should take some responsibility. (Samuel, Int 2, 2)

We get a lot more responsibility and we can see it because in senior years you get treated more like an equal - you're not treated like a child anymore. (Lance, Gp 11, 3)

Responsibility was linked with appropriate behaviour and making the most of the senior years of high school. Teachers used opportunities created by student misbehaviour to encourage students to be responsible.

.... I got sent to Mr Carter. And he gave me a lecture and he told me that he doesn't want me wasting my life. .... He told us that it is all up to us. It is our responsibility. .... He was right in the end. (Mauro, Gp 9, 8)

There was a similarity between the participants' answers recalling examples of teacher exhortations to both responsibility and maturity. Teachers spoke about the importance of responsibility and maturity to both individuals and groups of students. While teachers may use statements about responsibility and appropriate masculine behaviour as a way of managing student behaviour, interviewees perceived these comments as influencing their understanding of masculinity. This contribution of teacher comments will be analysed in Section 5.5.3 as part of the discussion.

### **Strength**

Five participants (13%) responses are reported in the third theme of strength.

I think I was in Primary School, Year 6... The PE teacher said... "You've got to be tough to be a man. You have to become stronger if you want to be a man." (Fred, Gp 10, 1)

.... the Principal came in and he was saying about how the students were too soft for the school.... If you look back at past years' sport teams, they were more strong, willing to have a go. (Patrick, Gp 6, 1)

Participants quoted examples of when teachers instructed them to be "*tough*" or "*strong*". Frequently this was associated with being challenged to demonstrate they can act in a way that enhances their masculine identity.

### **Teacher student relationships**

Teacher student relationships featured in three responses (8%). They involved a different type of verbal communication than the exhortations to maturity or responsibility.

Our old Year 7 coordinator Mrs King said to a group of my friends ... recently 'You may be in Year 11 but you are still my little babies' sort of made me feel like I am all grown up now, it is like becoming a man. (Scott, Int 8, 3)

The prime characteristic of perceptions reported in this theme was the importance of teachers who communicated pride in participants' developing identity as young men. This involved different combinations of communication that participants perceived as signs of positive teacher relationships that enhance their sense of masculinity.

### **No response**

Thirteen participants (34%) gave no response regarding whether teachers' had influenced their thinking about being a man. This included participants who remained silent in a group interview or expressed an inability to recall a particular event or experience. The following response is representative of participants who stated they were unable to give a specific example.

I can't think of a situation. But teachers have said things to me that have made me think about being a man. (Owen, Int 6, 1)

There are various possible reasons why Question 1 had a smaller number of responses than any other interview question. Possible explanations include: inability to recall a situation; reticence to give a response until rapport is established; difficulty in interpreting the question; or participants choosing not to share their views. An analysis of participants' responses to all questions indicated that a likely explanation was their inability to recall an event in response to the first question.

### **5.2.2 Teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers' on their understanding of masculinity.**

Question 2 asked participants: "Have your teachers influenced your understanding of masculinity?" Table 5.1 summarises their responses.

Table 5.1 : Responses to Question 2: Have your teachers influenced your understanding of masculinity? Please explain.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, teachers have influenced understanding	27	71
No, teachers have not influenced understanding	5	13
Yes and No, mixed response, uncertain	5	13
No answer	1	3
Total	38	100



## **Yes, teachers have influenced understanding**

Twenty seven participants (71%) stated that teachers have influenced their understanding of masculinity. Participants indicated that one reason why teachers influence them is because of the amount time they spend with teachers.

.... I probably see the teachers more often than I do my Dad, because I only see him at night time because he leaves early in the morning. There must be some kind of profound influence that actually happens even though you might not realise it. (Lance, Gp 11, 13)

Others reported comments by teachers that have influenced their understanding of masculinity.

...you might get a little knock and then “Oh come on, get up, be a man”.... Just brush it off you’ll be right, forgetting about your injury... (Marco, Int 9, 7)

Interviewees indicated that teachers have a role in providing example, guidance and inspiration. The following three responses exemplify this.

I think they give you something to aim at. Like you should grow up ... doing the same things as your teacher. They give you a guide ... To inspire you ... I look at one of the PE teachers to be fit ... to make the best of your school years so you can be a successful man. (Fred, Gp 10, 8)

Seeing the way they act ... and I [am] sure it influences you, subliminally. Like you see how they act and then you might do the same thing in the same type of situation. (Thomas, Gp 3, 8)

.... those teachers you tend to look up to, the ones you do treat as a friend they are more of an idol to you. (Romano, Gp 1, 8).

Other participants also identified positive teacher student relationships as an influence on their understanding of masculinity.

The teachers who have probably influenced me more are teachers I am involved with outside with more with basketball and ... music. I get to know the teachers a bit better. They influence the way you act, the way you are. .... The way we talk to them kind of influences the way you think about yourself.... (Owen, Int 6, 4)

Frequently, the word “*friend*” was used to describe teachers the participants viewed as influential, communicative, non-hierarchical or empathetic.

Well some teachers they are like on a friend basis with you, and that is when you can have experiences of being a man. Some teachers they are just strictly business, you know, they are just teaching the class and not really getting to know the students. (Tomas, Gp 1, 18)

They treat you as equals... Not as a teacher, as a friend. (Kevin, Int 5, 4)

Several participants viewed class size as a significant factor when considering the influence of their teachers. One interviewee described the advantage of relating to a teacher in an Industrial Arts class comprised of six students.

You get along a lot better with them because they get to know you a lot better, you get to know them better, rather than with 25 students in a class. (Matthew, Gp 1, 12)

Participants reported the role of teachers in discipline and student behaviour. Teachers linked responsibility and maturity to appropriate masculine behaviour. Participants referred to responsibility when responding to a wide range of interview questions. The following is representative of this type of response to Question 2.

Like they say wake up to yourself, you're not a little boy anymore, act more mature like your age (Graham, Gp 2, 14)

### **Yes and No, mixed response, uncertain**

Five participants (13%) gave mixed responses that indicated an ambivalent view when evaluating the influence of teachers. The following response is an example:

Not really. Just some of them might have but not intentionally, just by what they might have done and by other actions. (Joshua, Gp 10, 10)

### **No, teachers have not influenced understanding**

Five participants (13%) responded that teachers had not influenced their understanding of masculinity. For example, one participant answered:

Not really. It is mostly on our own. Friends have done it. (Nathan, Gp 5, 16).

## 5.3 Perceptions of teacher messages about masculinity

### 5.3.1 Teenage boys' awareness of their teachers' views on masculinity

Question 3 asked: "Do the teachers' messages about masculinity come across to you? Please explain." Table 5.2 summarises the participants' responses to the question.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	68
No	6	16
Yes and No, unsure	3	8
No answer	3	8
Total	38	100

Twenty six students (68%) responded by agreeing with the question. There was a range of responses from two participants (5%) giving a simple yes statement to twenty four students (63%) giving more detail or supporting examples. The following is an example of the simple response.

Yes they do. You listen to what they say. (Damien, Gp 10, 15)

There were three recurring themes within the affirmative responses that gave supporting examples. The themes are: "watching, listening and thinking", "some not all", and "responsible and mature".

#### **Watching, listening and thinking**

The first group of fourteen responses indicated that these participants were watching, listening and thinking about the masculinity messages they received from their teachers. Some interviewees believed this is a subtle process.

I think they do. Yea, I mean, it is not a thing that they make obvious. (Owen, Int 6, 6)

I wouldn't say that they were real clear. Hints. (Guy, Int 7, 6)

Participants indicated that they took time to consider teachers' comments and behaviour. Further reflection enabled participants to understand their teachers' views on masculinity.

Sometimes - its not actually clear at the time, but once you actually get to think about it may sink in. (Joshua, Gp 10, 18)

I don't know really ... So it is more subtle. There is nothing that you would actually do where they say "This is masculine, this is something masculine to do". ....It's more something that you pick up, it is more like you interpret it. (Kane, Gp 11, 18)

Other participants spoke about teacher student conflicts and teenage boys' struggle for power as influential.

I think they try to come across but we are just too stubborn to try to get them. We are young and we think we know it all. The first opportunity that you have to prove a teacher wrong, you take it! .... you don't want to look like 'teachers pet' or 'a good little boy'. (Simon, Gp 8, 22)

.... The teachers have got the power in the classroom. When you get the slight smell of power you try and take advantage of it. You hate them telling you, telling you, telling you. .... I think that is why you don't tend to pay attention. (Zac, Gp 8, 26)

Participants described the messages about masculinity that they associated with teachers of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PD/H/PE) teachers.

You see a lot of the teachers, especially the PE teachers as they walk around looking really sporty, sort of 'Macho Man'. (Scott, Int 8, 9)

The way teachers walk and talk featured in comments about the attitudes and behaviour of teachers who are football coaches.

You look at the way they walk ... the way they talk. They have talks about the matches, like who smashed who, who crunched some other guy and how he's proud of this guy cos he tackled this guy really bad. (Ben, Gp 3, 22)

### **Some not all**

In the second group of responses, six participants described their view that some, not all, teachers had messages that came across to them.

Some - it depends which teacher ... says it to you. Mr Tolini is really good, I respect him, I take his opinions. But other teachers will just put you down and you have no hope and you don't know what to do. (Kristoff, Gp 9, 17)

Personality was an important factor for several participants in assessing teacher messages about masculinity.

It depends on personality types. If they are an extroverted person or an introverted person as well. Some teachers are loud, not so much raucous, but outgoing. Some teachers don't say what they think as much. (Anthony, Gp 3, 15)

The responses reported within this theme demonstrated that some participants were able to discern that particular teachers were influential, while they believed others had no impact on their understanding of masculinity. Influential teachers were reported to be outgoing and respectful of the students.

### **Responsible and mature**

The third theme contains four answers where participants indicated their perception that teachers believed masculinity means students are responsible and mature.

When you get busted the teachers yell at you about how you should be mature and responsible, but usually in class they tell you, they usually repeat it a lot of times so you remember it. (Gavin, Gp 7, 23)

### **Teachers' messages about masculinity do not come across**

Six participants (16%) indicated teachers' messages about masculinity did not come across to them. There was a significant range of responses by the boys who disagreed with the question. Some participants gave answers without reasons.

No, not really, a few do, but I don't really pay attention to them really. (Marco, Int 9, 12)

Other participants explained reasons for their perception that teachers' views on masculinity do not come across to them. There was no consistent reason given. However, one participant was highly critical of teachers.

Not here! The teachers still treat you like kids! They don't give you enough freedom and ... get you for silly things! (Samuel, Int 2, 2)

### 5.3.2 Teenage boys' perceptions of how their teachers' views are communicated

Question 4 asked participants: "Do the teachers' views on masculinity come across to you via subtle or explicit ways? (i.e. direct or indirect ways) Please explain." Table 5.3 is a summary of participants' responses. It is noted that four participants changed their expressed views from Question 3 to Question 4. Two of the participants were in individual interviews and two were in different group interviews. No reasons were given by participants for changes of perceptions but it is possible that participants in group interviews may have been influenced by their involvement in group discussion.

	Frequency	Percentage
Subtle or indirect	18	47
Explicit or direct	9	24
Both subtle (indirect) and explicit (direct)	8	21
No, teachers' views do not come across	2	5
Don't know	1	3
Total	38	100

#### Subtle or indirect ways

Eighteen students (47%) stated that the teachers' views on masculinity come across via subtle or indirect ways. The following response is representative of those participants who stated that teachers' views come across to them indirectly.

I think it is subtle because sometimes they are just talking and they are not meaning to say something about masculinity, but you just interpret, you look deeper into it.  
(Tomas, Gp 1, 32)

Some interviewees offered explanations of how the process of subtle influence occurs. One described his perception that "you get your messages about the role you got to play" (Dale, Int 1, 8). Another participant insisted that his teachers' views on masculinity came across to him even while stating that he "can't see it".

It is probably more subtle because I don't really know that I am actually picking it up directly. Like it is affecting me, but I can't see it. .... You'd be pretty naïve not to think so, I think. You are living in that environment and growing up with them and surely some of their attitudes must be passed on to you as you get older. (Aidan, Int 3, 9)

Participants interviewed identified that jokes communicated teachers' views on masculinity.

.... sexist jokes, as in a funny way, not meant to be degrading to anyone. Knocking the stereotypes [of] women drivers, if you are speaking about motor accidents, women seem to be higher than men. Have a joke about it. (Kevin, Int 5, 8)

Whilst teacher joke telling was perceived as influential, teacher interventions in response to student laughter was reported as instructive. Patrick stated that Mr Carter used student laughter during a video as an opportunity to “drop hints about what men should do” about masculinity.

Mr Carter kept stopping the video because people who were laughing at those scenes when the man was hitting his wife, and he was saying "That's wrong, you shouldn't do that, if you are laughing at it you are condoning it." (Patrick, Gp 6, 22)

### **Explicit or direct ways**

Nine participants (24%) stated that teacher views on masculinity came across explicitly. Sometimes these directly expressed views are not well received by students who viewed this communication as repetitive and unwelcome.

I think they are trying to be too direct and that is why we don't pay any attention to it. If they said it more in an indirect way we would pick it up. We'd have to think about it. Like you hear it a lot with the seniors, you're in [a] senior year now not [a] in junior year. And them just saying that to us, you just don't pay any attention, you think “Who cares”. (Simon, Gp 8, 32)

As regards messages about masculinity, participants viewed personal communications more favourably than more impersonal lectures to a whole group of students. Interviewees who nominated “direct ways” indicated that general comments to mass audience had limited value and were frequently ignored. For example “if they say something to you directly then you'll think about it” (Will, Gp 7, 25).

Interviewees recounted examples of their experience of direct, one to one, communication with teachers. Sometimes this style of communication is in response to an incident of misbehaviour. This interviewee recalled a conversation that occurred three years previously.

....in Year 8 .... Miss Antony. I was mucking around with the taps and sprayed someone and she got me after class and I got a detention and she said 'You know, you've got to grow up and stop acting like a little boy' .... I think those types of things influence me. Especially as it was 'one on one' ... so it was pretty fortunate. (Gavin,Gp 7, 28)

### **Both subtle and explicit ways**

Eight students (21%) believed teachers' views on masculinity come across via both subtle and explicit ways. Participants who stated that teachers use both ways of communication frequently gave responses that were more perceptive than other interviewees. The following two responses described how both direct and indirect ways are perceived.

Some indirect and some direct, a bit of both. When we used to have PE and somebody might get a little knock, the teacher he or she might say 'oh get up' directly to that student but everybody else will hear it. And so, when they get a knock they won't really complain about it, trying to be a man and to hide the pain. ....(Marco, Int 9, 16)

They do have the directness - especially to us as we are supposed to be very good men, honest men, do the right thing all the time. Where other places might not have that. But they also do it indirectly. Football is a very masculine thing and they prop it up a lot so that they want more masculine activities going on. .... (Joshua, Gp 10, 26)

Two participants (5%) stated that teachers' views on masculinity do not come across to them. One participant (3%) indicated that he was unsure and didn't know.

### **5.3.3 Teenage boys' perceptions of their teachers' views on the best forms of masculinity**

Question 5 asked participants: "Have your teachers said or done anything which gives the impression that one form of masculinity is best? If yes, describe what was said or done."

Table 5.4 is a summary of participants' responses.



Have your teachers said or done anything which gives the impression that one form of masculinity is best? If yes, describe what was said or done.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	45
No	11	29
Both Yes and No	6	16
No answer	4	10
Total	38	100

Seventeen participants (45%) perceived that teachers gave the impression that one form of masculinity is best. Student responses within the “Yes” and from the “Both Yes and No” categories include three themes: “emotions”, “responsibility” and “other perceptions”. The six participants (16%) who responded “Both Yes and No” are included because in part of their answer they asserted that teachers give the impression that one form of masculinity is best. Whilst recognising the mixed views expressed in their responses, the answers are combined because of the similarity between the “Yes” and the affirmative parts of the “Yes and No” responses.

### Emotions

Ten participants (26%) in their responses to this question discussed “emotions”. They spoke about power, toughness, feelings and strength. Frequently, participants reported that teachers viewed the best form of masculinity was to be “*strong*”.

We have been told not to be weak but to be committed, .... and to be strong, not weak and not to give up on homework questions and try harder. (Alex, Gp 7, 48)

Mr Hanley puts across to you that you've got this strong mind, strong body, he puts that very direct to you. (Graham, Gp 2, 54)

The teenage boys’ interviewed stated there were different teacher expectations about the best form of masculinity in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education in comparison with English. Participants reported that conflicting expectations about emotional expression was a difficulty.

Sort of contradictions between .... different sectors of the school that are differently orientated. Like PE might be sport orientated, sport is masculine, not to show any pain. Or for English is to show your emotions, write with emotions. But how you are meant to show your emotions when you are getting the other at the same time? Pretty strange in a way! (Joshua, Gp 10, 35)

Several participants gave responses that indicated awareness of different ways in which teachers responded to their own emotions. The following response is one participant's perception of teachers' views on expressing their feelings.

Some teachers are more ready to display their feelings. If they are not having a good day they will share it with you and say: look I am in a bit of trouble here,.... And that is saying: that is alright if that is how you feel, you feel that you can share it. (Aiden, Int 3, 11)

Participants described teachers of PDHPE and football coaches as favouring students who compete in “*manly*” sports. These teachers are perceived as reinforcing the message that teenage boys are expected to be “*tough*”.

All the PD teachers at our school are really sporty .... They look at the academic people as being not tough and manly because they are academic. They'll see ... the sporty people are ... the big guns. Don't touch him. He's on the footy team. (Thomas, Gp 3, 56)

## **Responsible**

Six students (16%) reported that teachers believed “*responsible*” behaviour is an important characteristic of the best form of masculinity.

.... to strive to be a leader ... to younger people and be responsible for your actions. ....It's the type of image they try to get you to. (William, Gp 7, 48)

Participants discussed responsibility and explained features of this desired form of masculine behaviour. Aspects of responsible behaviour include: “people are able to communicate with you” (Aziel, Gp 8, 67) and students meeting the requirements of the school regarding submitting assignments and attending training.

.... responsibilities are pretty important in the school. Like soccer responsibilities, if you don't go to training, you're benched. We've got responsibilities with assignments. Responsibilities are set upon you ... (Simon, Gp 8, 69)

## **Other perceptions**

The third theme is broad and includes student responses describing “other perceptions” that are different to the previous themes of responsibility and emotion. There is no unifying theme within this category of responses. They included perceptions of teacher attitudes and teacher statements recalled by students. One participant perceived that his women teachers

“seem to want the man in the house .... in the family” (Kevin, Int 5, 10). Another interviewee quoted his English teacher’s view of homosexuals. “There is nothing wrong with them, they are just normal people” (Samuel, Int 2, 10).

### **Not one best form of masculinity**

Eleven participants (29%) stated that teachers did not give the impression that there was one best form of masculinity. A common feature of these responses was an awareness of the plurality of masculinities supported by teachers and the school. Participants described different views of masculinity between teachers and across a range of school subjects. The following responses are representative of participants who reported this perception.

Different aspects of masculinity not just one. ... Different definitions of masculinity within different subjects. (Matthew, Gp 1, 37)

Lots of ways. ... They try to bring out the special things in different people as everyone is different. .... (Yunis, Gp 9, 26)

While seven participants gave no reason for disagreeing with the question, four students explained the reason for their views. The following response is similar to other participants who outlined why teachers did not favour one form of masculinity.

No, not really. .... It's basically up to us, our choice to decide what we want to be. They can just basically guide us, they don't say “This is the better form”, or “This isn't.” (Fritz, Int 10, 12)

## **5.4 Role models in school**

Question 16 asked participants: “Is there any adult in the school who is a good role model for you? Table 5.5 is a summary of responses.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	88
No	2	8
No answer	1	4
Total	25	100

Question 16 was included after the pilot phase of data collection. This was explained in Chapter 3: Methodology, Section 3.3.1. Consequently, 25 participants from the main phase of data collection were asked this question. Twenty two students (88%) agreed with the question. Nineteen of these students nominated adults in school and described reasons why they viewed them as role models. Two of the adults nominated had non-teaching roles: Mr Barton was a principal and Br Andrew was a chaplain. All the adults nominated were members of the teaching staffs of both schools. Participants nominated no other non-teaching adults within the school.

Responses to this question will be quoted in more detail due to both the individual and lengthy nature of the answers. Participants' responses to Question 16 will be reported in six groups that illustrate the diverse features of the interviewees' perceptions of teacher role models.

### **Mr Carter most nominated role model**

Mr Carter was the most nominated role model by the participants attending St Mark's College. He was a member of the school executive with a role involving teaching combined with curriculum and administration. Table 5.6 provides an analysis of the participants' descriptions of Mr Carter's qualities that led them to nominate him as a role model.

Quality	Participant's description
Respect	"he treats you with the equal amount of respect that he would any other adult" (Kristoff)
How he speaks	"what he says to me" (Yunis) "if you do something wrong, he won't just scream at you" (Peter)
Acts with integrity	"he speaks the way he acts" (Mauro)
Listening and non-judgemental inquiry	"...he doesn't just jump to conclusions. He finds out what happened first. So you can actually speak as well." (Yunis) "...he would ask you questions to get your point of view on it." (Kristoff)
Non-judgemental reprimand	"he sorts things out properly" (Yunis) "he will tell you what you have done wrong, and why it is wrong, how you can fix it in the future" (Peter)

Mr Carter was mentioned by the St Mark's College students in answers to a full range of questions across the interview schedule. Every time Mr Carter was named, he received

praise from the participants. There were numerous comments that indicated he was respected because of his skill in relating respectfully to students, even in the context of administering punishment. His intervention in response to student laughter at domestic violence during the viewing of a video in an English lesson received significant favourable comment.

### **Earning respect**

Participants stated that there were particular teachers with whom they identified. There was a variety of reasons given for this positive identification but a common feature was that the role model had earned the respect of the student. Several interviewees indicated that the teacher shared the personality or outlook of the student. "He has the same sort of views, I can relate to them" (Lance, Gp 11, 108). Role models gained the respect of students due to their choices, behaviour and aspirations for the teenage boys in their care. The following two responses are representative of this perception.

Mr Coyne ... I have a lot of respect for him after he told me he has a pretty good job in the city in computing and he actually gave that up and did teaching...(Joshua, Gp 10, 148)

Mr Barton and Br Andrew - their perspective on us, the way they treat us, they are good. The way they think we should be and act. .... (Mauro, Gp 9, 108)

There is evidence from the responses that indicate participants identified role models because they demonstrated a high level of personal integrity. Participants implied that role models acted in accordance with values.

Mr Pearl is what you would call a very good man. ... the main idea is that what he does is true. (Zac, Gp 8, 177)

....You probably believe what [Mr O'Neill] says. You don't dismiss him like other teachers. .... He helps lots of kids turn themselves around, pick themselves up and kids having a lot of days absent. .... (Fritz, Int 10, 50)

### **Know their students**

Role models knew their students and this also provided opportunities for students to get to know their teachers. Participants reported that this is very difficult in a large class, but is

possible when there are fewer students “you get a lot more involved with the teacher” (Alex, Gp 7, 122). Several participants described the value of teachers getting to know their students. The following response is indicative of the participants’ perception that teacher role models promote learning by knowing their students.

The students really want to get to know the teachers, so the teachers know their strengths and weaknesses so they can help you.... Students aren't going to speak in front of the class about their problems. People might laugh, they don't find it easy. But one to one it's easy for them. (Gavin, Gp 7, 121)

Teachers who get to know the students communicated the desire to understand the difficulties faced by the teenage boys in the school. One participant, describing role models in the school, classified the adults in two groups.

There are some teachers who try to understand you, but there are others who don't really care. (Gavin, Gp 7, 118)

Participants valued teachers who motivated students. Teachers who knew their students were able to identify achievable goals. One participant stated: “He understands people and doesn't expect them to do the impossible” (Alex, Gp 7, 116). Another participant described the ability of a role model teacher to understand and motivate students.

Recently our class has been mucking up and going really poorly in exams and he has really tried to put more effort into his teaching to try to get us up a little. He really tried to motivate us and he's started more talking to us: "Guys, you've got to try and work really hard." He's motivated me a lot more. Yes, I think he is a very good teacher. (Will, Gp 7, 124)

### **Relating with students**

Participants spoke favourably of role models who were able to promote positive relationships with the students. One important aspect was effective and open communication. Interviewees reported that role models spoke with students and that students talked to them. Here are two extracts from participants’ responses. “He's always been the sort you could talk to” (Fritz, Int 10, 49). “She'd talk to us if we had a problem....” (Will, Gp 7, 117).

Some participants described the ability of teachers to relate with students in the informal setting of the school yard at lunchtime. One interviewee stated “she'd talk to us at lunch. ....

she always interacted” (Alex, Gp 7, 119). Another participant indicated that the playground was a safe environment.

There are some teachers who'd wander around at lunchtime, they may not be on lunch duty but they would still walk around and get to know the students about their feelings. The classroom can sometimes be hostile, you can't really speak your mind about certain things. (Will, Gp 7, 120)

Sporting competitions and extra-curricular activities provided students with other opportunities to relate to their teachers beyond the classroom. Participants valued occasions when they were able to interact with teachers they regarded as role models. “....I do Mock Trial with him..... He gives you a positive attitude” (Ben, Gp 3, 333). Respected teachers were perceived as consistent and encouraging in their interactions with students. For example

“.... the way he's trying to get you to grow up more stronger in heart” (Keith, Gp 6, 107).

### **Teacher as friend**

Participants valued teachers who were able to relate to students in a friendly manner. There was recognition that teachers were in a different role to their peers. The teenage boys interviewed admired teachers who were both secure in their role and enjoyed their work. “.... I learn from Mr Hunt. He is serious but smiles” (Aziel, Gp 8, 179). Another participant expressed his respect for teachers who related to students while maintaining professional boundaries.

The teachers like you can talk to and relate to, you tend to respect them a lot more as well. .... they're still the teacher, but you can get along with them better and like you just do better in their classes. (Anthony, Gp 3, 337)

Interviewees generally did not discuss the ages of teachers they viewed as role models. The next response is the only one where a teacher nominated as a role model may not be acting within the accepted bounds of appropriate professional behaviour.

I might say Mr. Landler. He is sort of like young and he can relate to us. We can have a conversation with him that we would have with our friends. Like we could say, "That girl is pretty nice". He'll come and look at our folders and say, "Yes, these girls in your folder, they are most attractive". He'll talk about other teachers. Not in a bad way. “She is a nice girl”. He'll talk about football on the weekend, like who won what matches. He's like a school friend. (Thomas, Gp 3, 335)

## **Teachers who are not respected**

Several participants responded by describing teachers who they perceived were the antithesis of role models. Teachers who were not respected were perceived to be racist or chauvinist.

A teacher that won't do that is my Wood Tech teacher, Mr Carrington. I think he is racist. The way he treats me and my cousin. When we work in groups. He helps out others, a group of Australians, but not our group. (Yunis, Gp 9, 116)

....The teacher that is giving you put-downs, like they're the hero and there is no one who will ever live up to them. It is like they are tough and you're a bunch of women.... (Anthony, Gp 3, 337)

## **5.5 Discussion**

### **5.5.1 Teachers enhance teenage boys' understanding of masculinity**

#### **Limited literature**

There is a limited literature on the influence of teachers on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. Consequently, fewer connections will be made in this discussion to academic writing than in the corresponding sections of Chapters 4 and 6. This study will make a contribution to the research on masculinity by providing an analysis of some teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers.

Researchers such as Lingard and Douglas (1999), Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), Connell (1996), Mac an Ghail (1994), Angus (1993) have asserted teachers have an important role in the development of student masculinities. Many of the participants' perceptions of teachers given in the response to Question 1 were also evident in their responses to later questions. Prominent researchers in the field of masculinities and schooling have highlighted the need to engage teachers in gender reform and the promotion of pro-feminist approaches to the education of boys. Clearer understandings of the views of teenage boys can inform research and educational initiatives designed to enhance the positive contribution of teachers to student masculinities.



## **Teachers perceived as influential**

Teachers are perceived as one of many influences on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity (see Section 4.5). Twenty seven participants (71%) agreed that teachers influenced their understanding of masculinity. Twenty five interviewees (66%) recounted experiences with teachers who have said or done something that they associated with being a man. Twenty six participants (68%) stated that their teachers' views on masculinity came across to them. The teenage boys interviewed said that teachers' views on masculinity come across to them by subtle, explicit and a combination of both ways. There was a diversity of perspectives on whether teachers gave the impression that one form of masculinity was best.

## **Students observing teachers**

The majority of teenage school boys in the study viewed their teachers as important influences on masculinity. Interviewees reported the influence of teachers using a range of examples. Their responses indicated that many teenage boys were keen observers of teacher behaviour and attentive listeners when teachers said or did something students associated with masculinity. Some recalled teacher comments from primary school and junior secondary education. Other participants perceived that the way particular teachers walked and talked was related to their preferred type of masculinity.

## **Relationships with teachers**

Participants' responses indicated the presence of different types of relationships with teachers. Some teachers were perceived as remote, while others were viewed as engaging their teenage students. Most frequently, participants described features of their relationships with teachers whom they knew and who knew them. There were some answers to questions about teachers that included comments about school Principals and Assistant Principals but these responses were rare. Interviewees' answers to the questions provided a marked contrast to the findings of the study by Beynon (1989). Beynon reported that the students critiqued the culture of violence and brutality enforced by the teachers. However, Beynon's study of a particular culture and is not representative of the culture of other schools where students viewed their teachers as friendly and supportive. For example, Green (1998)

described 'ease of relationships' between staff and students as a feature of the culture of Australian Catholic secondary schools established by the Marist Brothers. Many participants in the current study valued friendly student relationships with teachers and perceived them as a positive influence on their understanding of masculinity. Interviewees reported that smaller class sizes promoted learning by providing opportunity for better understanding between students and their teachers.

Participants believed teachers who were friendly or connected with them influenced their understanding of masculinity. Interview responses indicated that teachers who adopted a friendly and respectful style of relating were perceived as enhancing the students' self-understanding as teenage boys. These teachers related with the students in a more adult style of relationship during their final years of secondary education. This finding is similar to the perceptions of 'good teachers' reported by Slade and Trent (2000). Participants also reported that the attitude of teachers towards students had an impact on their learning and application to study.

.... prefer to have the connection with the teachers and a friendship, tend to do better, if you don't like the teacher then you are not going to like the subject.... (Tomas, Gp1, 18)

Teenage boys' interviewed for this study described the contribution of both men and women teachers to their understanding of masculinity. Some participants named women teachers as role models. This is similar to the view expressed by Hartman (1999) that women teachers have a positive contribution to make in modelling good relationships with teenage boys.

### **Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Teachers**

Responses to the questions indicated that the teachers of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) are significant influences for some boys. PDHPE teachers are involved in sport, physical education, physiology, drug and sexuality education. Research by Gard (2001) and Wright (2000) found that aspects of the teaching of the New South Wales PDHPE course contributed to the culture of masculinity in schools. In addition to these studies, school sport, coaches and Physical Education teachers have received attention from some masculinity researchers including Pollack (1998), Salisbury and Jackson (1996), Messner (1992), and Humberstone (1990). These studies found that teachers and other adults involved with teenage boys in sport are important influences on adolescent attitudes.

Participants in the current study reported contrasting experiences of PDHPE teachers. Some responded that their teachers were inclusive and encouraged less athletic students. This view accords with the findings of Humberstone (1990) and Pollack (1998) who reported the transformative role played by some PE teachers and sporting coaches. Other participants described their PDHPE teachers as demanding students to be 'tough', favouring boys who are talented at sport. This is similar to the views of Salisbury and Jackson (1996), Messner (1992), Parker (1996), Wright (2000) and Gard (2001). This study has found that PDHPE teachers are influential because teenage boys pay particular attention to PDHPE teachers' understandings of masculinity.

### **Three aspects of influence: teacher action, teacher talk, and esteemed teachers**

Three aspects of teacher influence on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity will be examined here: teacher action, teacher talk and esteemed teachers.

#### **5.5.2 Teacher action and masculinity**

Teenage boys participating in the study used examples of behaviour to explain the influence of teachers on their understanding of masculinity. Diverse actions, including body posture, movement and non verbal communication, all contributed to the meaning of masculinity students ascribed to their teachers. One area of influential teacher action was regarding emotional expression and masculinity.

##### **Emotional expression**

The participating teenage boys reported a diversity of teacher views on the expression of emotions and masculinity. Participants were expected to be able to express emotions during poetry lessons in English. This was in contrast to the expectation of strength and toughness in sport and PDHPE classes. One interviewee explained how he responded to sporting injury by "trying to be a man and to hide the pain" (Marco). Conflicting expectations regarding the expression of emotion are also examined in Chapters 4 and 6. However, it is important to note here that participants acknowledged the contribution of teachers to their understanding of emotional expression and masculinity. Participants reported that some teachers reinforced the value of being "*strong*" and "*tough*". This was consistent with accepted understandings of hegemonic masculinity reported by other researchers such as

Parker (1996), Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Lingard and Douglas (1999). Other participants described teachers who promoted an understanding of masculinity that included open expression of diverse emotions including grief and vulnerability. Responses to the interview questions indicated that participants are attentive to their teachers' cues about appropriate emotional expression and students are developing their own views in the midst of conflicting expectations. Participants' responses indicated that influential experiences and teacher role models contributed to their perceptions of appropriate emotional expression.

### **5.5.3 Teacher talk and masculinity**

#### **Exhortations and conversations**

They are always having comments that you hear and a lot of them you usually brush by, but you think about them when you are all by yourself, just quiet time, think about what they've said. (Joel, Gp 2, 13)

Participants reported that teachers communicated messages about masculinity using exhortations and conversations. Exhortations were characterised by a senior teacher addressing a group of students using a monologue to urge them to adopt a particular behaviour. Conversations consisted of two way communication between a teacher and one or two individual students. The most common message given to students by teachers during exhortations was that to be a mature man you needed to be responsible. This message was also a feature of individual conversations with teachers, but one to one communication was more likely to be nuanced and aimed at enhancing many aspects of the teenage boys' sense of identity. Angus (1993) identified that being responsible and mature were features of the school's desired form of masculinity. Participants from both schools in the current study reported the consistent message they received was to be "*responsible*" and "*mature*".

Teachers may have diverse motivations for telling teenage boys to be "*responsible*" and to "*act like a man*". This study investigated the perceptions of students rather than the views of teachers. The assumptions of teachers about student masculinities and behaviour could be clarified by further research. Nevertheless, while teachers may use this language merely to gain student compliance, students perceive these statements as influencing their understanding of masculinity.

It is not possible to assess the effectiveness of both exhortations and conversations as strategies to influence teenage boys' understandings of masculinity. However, there are indications from the interview data to suggest that the credibility of the teacher in the eyes of the students is more important than the style of communication. Teachers who are respected by the students were more frequently named as having a positive influence on the participants. Interviewees reported that the widely respected Mr Carter used both exhortations and conversations. Participants also stated that the wide range of teacher comment strategies about masculinity promoted reflection.

Teenage boys in the study reported thinking about teacher comments and behaviour after the event. This may be related to participants' perceptions about how teachers communicate their views. Eighteen participants (47%) stated that teachers' views on masculinity were communicated via subtle or indirect ways. There is scope for research to clarify how teenage boys interpret teacher exhortations and conversations regarding masculinity.

## **Humour**

Humour is an important way in which teachers and students communicate views on masculinity. Some research on the way humour is used by students has been reported by Nayak and Kehily (2001) and Willis (1977). They claimed that teenage boys used humour to reinforce dominant understandings of masculinity. There has been less research on the relationship between teacher humour and student masculinities. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) cited examples of teachers using sexist humour with students perpetuating gender inequality and the objectification of women. Participants in the qualitative component of this study described few examples of teachers using humour to enforce student masculinities.

The role of humour was demonstrated by the jokes told by teachers and those told by students in the presence of teachers. The intervention of a teacher to stop the viewing of a video portraying an incident of domestic violence during an English lesson attracted considerable attention. Student laughter was challenged and participants perceived that the teacher gave a message of non-violent masculinity.

## **5.5.4 Esteemed teachers and masculinity**

### **Role models**

Twenty two students (88%) who were asked this question during the main round of interviews nominated at least one adult in the school who was a good role model. The adults nominated as good role models were predominantly men who were teachers with the respect of the students. Women teachers were given favourable mentions in answers to other questions but were only specially mentioned by three participants as good role models.

There has been limited research with teenage boys on role models and masculinity. However, Gurian (1999) and Pollack (1998) argued that teenage boys need mentors. Gurian described a mentor as like a 'third parent', providing additional support as an adolescent male matures. Pollack stated that mentors need to have a commitment to the boys' growth and shared a common interest. The participants' descriptions of some of their role model teachers shared features with mentors as outlined by Gurian and Pollack. Frequently, teachers nominated as role models participate with the nominating student in an activity such as sport, debating, or music performance. Activities such as camps, retreats and other educational programs outside the classroom enabled teenage boys other opportunities to relate with teachers in a way that enhances their understanding of masculinity.

### **An exemplar of masculinity**

The quality, frequency and widespread nature of participants' positive comments about Mr Carter indicated that they viewed him with a respect beyond that given to any other person nominated as a role model. Participants perceived Mr Carter as a man with credibility whose behaviour and words were viewed as a consistently good influence on their understanding of masculinity. There was no other teacher nominated by the interviewees at St Mark's College or St James' College in the same manner as this man. Mr Carter was respected for many reasons including his ability to demonstrate respect for the students by listening to their version of events in times of conflict. Table 5.6 summarised reasons he was given such respect.

There is a need for further research on teachers who are regarded by teenage boys as key role models that influence their understanding of masculinity. However, the interview data

points to the role of Mr Carter as an “exemplar of masculinity” for the boys of St Mark’s College. There is no precedent within the literature for the use of this term. The contribution of individual teachers to teenage boys’ understanding of masculinity has not been a focus of research to date in other published research studies. It cannot be determined whether teenage boys in other schools view particular teachers with the esteem that St Mark’s College students accorded Mr Carter. Nevertheless, this can be clarified by research. The following is proposed as a way of conceptualising what may become a focus for further investigation.

An exemplar of masculinity is an esteemed adult who embodies teenage boys’ aspirations of what it means to be a good man. Within the context of this study, the concept of an exemplar of masculinity is applied to a man who is a teacher with some leadership responsibilities within the school. It is unclear what are all the constituent dimensions of an exemplar of masculinity, such as, gender, role and personality. Responses to the interview question indicated that individual students nominated a range of teachers as role models. It is proposed that an exemplar of masculinity is respected by a cross-section of the student population. The primary characteristic is that an exemplar is widely honoured because of the ability to enhance teenage boys’ desires to act in a way that is respectful, just and masculine. There are few points of intersection with the literature on this matter. Connell (1996) described masculinities as dynamic, amenable to change and under active construction. An exemplar of masculinity may be a new expression of masculine identity within the context of the school. Another possible explanation is that this style of esteemed masculinity is related to the proposal raised in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1, that a new understanding of hegemonic masculinity may be emerging. A third alternative explanation is that Mr Carter is simply a representative of hegemonic masculinity. A final possible explanation is that Mr Carter is a unique individual in a particular context and this phenomenon is not found in other schools. Further research is needed to judge the applicability of the concept exemplar of masculinity to other settings.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter presented and discussed the data collected from the participants’ responses to six questions related to their perceptions of teachers’ influence on their understanding of masculinity. Participants’ responses were reviewed thematically for each question. The

final section of the chapter discussed key aspects of the perceived influence of teachers on teenage boys' and masculinity. The next chapter will report and discuss the participants' views on the role of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity.



## Chapter 6

# Teenage Boys' perceptions of the influence of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports and discusses teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity. Questions 6 to 11 of the interview schedule investigated the messages about masculinity participants associated with different aspects of school life. The actual words of participants' responses are used to provide examples of their stated perceptions. The constant comparative method was used to analyse the interview data and categorise responses into themes (see Chapter 3 Section 3.4). Section 6.8 discusses the participants' perceptions and provides comparisons with findings of other research.

### 6.2 Perceptions of the influence of school experiences

Table 6.1 summarises the categories of responses to Question 6. Thirty five of the thirty eight participants (92%) indicated that school had influenced their understanding of masculinity. Four key themes in participants' responses were: "being in an all boys' school", "values and standards of the school", "school size" and "school in partnership".

	Frequency	Percentage
Being in an all boys' school	14	37
Values and standards of the school	11	29
School size	4	11
School in partnership	4	11
Other responses	2	5
No answer	3	8
Total	38	100

## Being in an all boys' school

Fourteen participants (37%) described the importance of being in a single sex school. Every interviewee whose response is reported in this theme indicated that school had a direct influence on his understanding of masculinity because it had an all boys' enrolment and a male dominated culture.

Like the school has a lot of spirit, like a fellowship ... There's always been a large emphasis on the brotherhood in the school..... (Scott, Int 8, 22)

.... the atmosphere, because as its is all boys, even though I am quiet I have learnt to be more rowdy. (Dale, Int 1, 12)

The “being in an all boys' school” theme included two broad categories of responses. Some interviewees elaborated stating that peer expectations are a fundamental part of the all male student culture that influenced their understanding of masculinity. Other participants reported that teacher expectations contributed to their beliefs about masculine identity. It is important to note that this research reports participants' stated perceptions that the single sex character of the schools is an influence on masculinity, peer and teacher expectations. Interviewees may have different perceptions if they were enrolled in a co-educational high school.

The first group of participants who nominated “peer expectations” expressed this perception referring to factors such as “*peer pressure*” and “*acting tough*”. One interviewee stated that in a boys' school he was expected to “.... become more masculine around friends” (Marco, Int 9, 22). Another described his need to conform to the standards of his peers: “.... If you are not relating with friends, you're just not there” (Anthony, Gp 3, 86).

There is evidence from the responses that peers are active in promoting hegemonic masculinity. Nathan described that it was important for teenage boys in a single sex school to assert themselves among their peers.

.....So you have to show them that you are a man and you can stick up for yourself.  
.... you only have to do it once, it kind of sends out a clear signal to everyone else.  
(Nathan, Gp 5, 47)

The second group of participants who viewed “the being in an all boys' school” as influential then continued and described the contribution of “teacher expectations”. In the

following two transcript extracts one participant, Patrick, elaborated that teachers gave non-verbal cues indicating their views on emotional expression:

.... Some teachers at the school, like they didn't actually say it to you, but you could tell by the way they acted they expected you to be big, strong tough guy. Others they expect you to be more emotional sort of person. (Patrick, Gp 6, 37)

He continued with an analysis of his conversations with his teachers and the role of verbal cues in setting expectations regarding the display of emotions.

I think it is mainly [the] one on one conversations with them. Some teachers like I was pretty close to, they start speaking to you ... and you could tell about the way they spoke, how they spoke, what they were speaking to you about, they wanted you to be either more emotional or more a strong sort of person. (Patrick, Gp 6, 40)

The responses of participants indicated their awareness of the different expectations of teachers within their all boys' student environment. Some teachers expected teenage boys to "Toughen up and take it on the chin" (John, Gp 5, 43), while others desired the boys to be more "*emotional*". There is evidence from responses to suggest that teenage boys were attentive to the conflicting views of teachers and modified their behaviour according to the context and the views of individual teachers. This tends to support the perception reported in Chapter 5, Section 5.52, that teachers are an important influence on teenage boys' perceptions of emotional expression and masculinity. Some participants indicated that "*toughness*" was the least risky approach to emotions. There are indications from the responses that teenage boys are reluctant to express their emotions unless it is viewed as acceptable and actively encouraged by teachers and peers.

Participants described a characteristic of "being in an all boys' school" as the different expectations of male and female teachers. One interviewee described different teacher expectations in the transition from primary school.

I'd say the stronger male type teachers tried to make you grow up a bit faster whereas the female teachers gave you a bit more time. Just say if someone took your pencil in Years 6 or 5 you would have gone up and dobbed on them. If you did that in Year 7, and you had a stronger male teacher he would say "Just forget about it, start growing up". A female teacher might help you out and get the thing for you. (Keith, Gp 6, 44)

There are indications from the responses of several participants who viewed the gender of the teacher as significant in understanding their expectations regarding the expression of emotions. However, none of the interview questions asked participants to compare men or

women teachers. This merits further investigation. It is also important to acknowledge that interviewees return to the influence of their teachers when asked questions about school.

### **Values and standards of the school**

Eleven participants (29%) described the schools as influential because of the “values and standards of the school”. A first group of interviewees perceived that values, including trust, operated within the school.

They try to entrust values into you. They give you what values that they think you should have. Try and make you see why you should have those values. Some schools don't care. Whereas here they try and teach you what good values are. The school is trying to teach trust, forgiveness. (Joshua, Gp 10, 44)

Responses indicated that students in both schools perceived their Catholic boys' school as promoting values such as respect, compassion, trust and forgiveness. Some teenage boys' who participated in this study were able to articulate values promoted and contrasted their school with other schools and institutions. There were indications teenage boys in Year 11 were able to describe and critique values they saw operating in their school. Participants appreciated teachers who demonstrated encouragement and related in ways that promoted students' confidence.

A second group of answers within the “values and standards of the school” category described the importance of the high standards of discipline and uniform. Dress and behaviour codes reinforced the schools' positive expectations of students. Participants from both schools identified this aspect in their answers.

St James makes their students to be a more upstanding type of man. Expects that they will come out to a better man than like other schools. There is more discipline, so more upstanding type of man. (Fred, Gp 10, 40)

.... heaps of my friends complain, but I like that about this school. Like we got a uniform and we have to dress correctly. At work we have to have a uniform, you have to dress correctly or you're fired. (Zac, Gp 8, 71)

Some participants were aware uniform was an important symbol representing discipline and identity. Diverse views were expressed about their satisfaction with the enforcement of discipline and dress codes. However, there was significant acceptance that these standards were part of the understanding of masculinity within the school.

## **School size**

“School size” was important to four participants (11%). Each of the students whose responses fitted this category had attended a smaller Junior High before the senior years in the current school. No student who had continued in the same school from Year 7 nominated school size as an influence on his understanding of masculinity. While Question 6 asked participants about “this school” several explained why they viewed their smaller Junior High Schools as a positive influence.

.... Like in a smaller school for Years 7 to 10, the teachers know you. They look after you. .... (Peter, Gp 4, 30)

... when you are in a smaller school ... they treat you like men earlier, when we were in Yr 10, so there was more responsibility on us. .... (Mauro, Gp 9, 32)

The students of St Mark’s College who had attended smaller junior high schools tended to have positive experiences of schooling. There was variation in the reasons given for its influence on their perception of masculinity. Some participants valued the caring environment while others preferred the opportunities for greater independence and responsibility. There is not sufficient information given by participants to make conclusive comments about school size and the influence of junior high schools. It is noted that although participants were asked about perceptions of “this school”, four students reported perceptions of their junior high school.

## **School in partnership**

Four participants (11%) stated that the influence of school, teachers, friends and parents were connected. These responses were categorised as “school in partnership”.

I agree, though teachers have a fair amount of impact it's more the parents who try and drive the screws. (Gavin, Gp 7, 46)

Whilst this category of responses was comparatively small in number, it included answers that indicated that the school’s influence was part of a combination of factors. Several participants explained that parents, friends, teachers and school experiences all contribute when evaluating the influence of school on their understanding of masculinity.

## Summary

The aim of Question 6 was to investigate if the teenage boys interviewed perceived school as influencing their understanding of masculinity. Thirty five participants (92%) indicated that it did and explained how they viewed school as exercising this influence. The most commonly reported responses related to “being in an all boys’ school” or the “values and standards” of the school.

### 6.3 Perceptions of the understanding of masculinity promoted by the school

Table 6.2 summarises the responses of participants to Question 7.

Does this school promote one particular understanding of masculinity? Or does it promote a number of understandings of masculinity? If yes, describe them		
	Frequency	Percentage
School promotes one understanding	18	47
School promotes a number of understandings	17	45
Another answer not clearly assigned to either category	1	3
No answer	2	5
Total	38	100

Participants were divided in their views on whether their school promoted “one” or “a number” of understandings of masculinity. However, a feature of the answers was the similarity between responses in terms of characteristics of masculinity promoted by the school.

I think it promotes skills in the future life. Because there is a lot of different teachers at this school that send out different ideas about masculinity and what it means to be a man. So you get one thing from one teacher and another thing from another. You put them all together and then you finally become an adult... (Scott, Int 8, 30)

One way. As the school as the whole portrays how boys should be. ... You have to act very mature, you have to follow the strict rules, clean cut. And if you follow those rules you are going to turn out to be the best person in the world. (Graham, Gp 2, 63)

Both responses described school as promoting masculinity oriented to the future as a mature and responsible adult. A feature of the responses to Question 7 was participants’ insights into school and the promotion of masculinity. Whether the participants perceived that the school promoted one or a number of understandings was less significant. Another feature of

responses to this question was that participants conceive “school” in different ways. None of the questions in the interview schedule was designed to clarify students’ meanings of this word. Some participants’ answers indicated that “school” meant administrators and teachers while others referred to peers and school activities.

Several interviewees stated that their school promoted one understanding based on student participation and teacher support.

They want you to get more involved in a lot of the activities of this school. .... Yeh, if you've got the skill and talent you shouldn't just hide it, you should get into it and have a go at everything you can. (Gavin, Gp 7, 46)

.... I played in the indoor soccer .... competition down in the gym at lunch time, in the first game we got smashed. The teachers were saying “At least you had a go, Well done.” (Alex, Gp 7, 48)

The teenage boys interviewed were reluctant to participate in school activities that could lead to public failure, embarrassment or having their sense of masculinity threatened. Responses of participants indicated that encouragement by teachers led to higher levels of student involvement and the expression of masculinity in a broader range of school activities.

### **Two or more understandings of masculinity**

Seventeen participants (45%) stated that their school promoted a number of understandings of masculinity. Of these seventeen, seven participants (18%) referred to two understandings: sporting and academic masculinities.

I'd say there is a number, because there is a number of things that you can do around the school: sport, academic, debating, public speaking ... different avenues. It is sort of rounded. The main two are academic and sport. Then you've got the others branch off them. (Kevin, Int 5, 14)

I think that you've got your “macho man” and you've got your, if I can say it: “nerds” people who study. (Joel, Gp 2, 66)

Almost half the teenage boys in the study indicated there were two dominant masculinities promoted by school: sporting and academic. This included all participants who nominated two understandings and most of those who describe a number of understandings of masculinity.

## **Promotion of sporting and academic understandings of masculinity**

Eighteen participants (47%) discussed the role of the school in promoting sport and masculinity. These participants' answers were recorded in both the "one" and a "number" of understandings of masculinity promoted by the school. Interviewees stated different perceptions of the promotion of sport.

The school supports everything from football to debating. (Lance, Gp 11, 36)

It would promote... [ pause] .... football. That is a big thing at this school obviously. Whenever you have the Firsts, if there is a football match on, in this school we are down there. But debating on the other hand. I was trying to organise some people to go to the grand final, and I could barely get 10 people who were willing to go. And the support is directed at the more masculine sports I suppose like football. Tennis doesn't have as big a name, and basketball not so much, but football is a real key thing at the school..... (Aidan, Int 3, 15)

The first interviewee quoted was in the minority of participants who spoke about football without stating it as a major priority for his school. The second gave a critical description of the comparative profiles of various sports and debating. More participants were critical of the emphasis placed on football. Another reported his perception of the introduction of gymnastics.

... they have only mainly like macho, more sort of sports like football, soccer. They don't have like people who like other types of sports. Like the other day the Principal told us that there was gymnastics sports coming in and he said "for that sort of person", implying it was for the softer person.. (Patrick, Gp 6, 47)

Participants reported that sport was important in their school. They perceived a hierarchy of status associated with achievement in different sports. The data indicated the view that both schools promoted achievement in football, particularly rugby league. The place of gymnastics in one school received several comments from participants that pointed to its low status in the hierarchy of masculinities.

## **"Images" of sporting and academic masculinities**

The following extract from a group interview explicates views on the "images" associated with sporting and academic achievement expressed by some participants.

.... I would have to say that the sport image is the one that everyone would rather chase. If a student is striving to be noticed, he would rather be on the sporting team than the debating team, which is seen as more academic. .... And there are a lot more sporting teams as compared to debating teams. (Ben)



I think we think sport is more masculine because you can show off your skills in front of a whole lot of people. With mock trial or debating there are only six people in a room and a few spectators like parents. On a field you can show off in front of your friends and show them what you can do. (Thomas)

Get more glory. Everyone goes to watch the footy team playing in the finals, but no one ever goes to see the elimination rounds of debating. (Anthony, Gp 3, 92-102)

Participants described a variety of reasons why teenage boys desired the image of masculinity associated with sporting achievement. The high public profile and the ability to “show off your skills” to friends and peers in an activity that is regarded as “more masculine” contributes to the significance of football. The image of academic achievement is valued but is perceived as lacking the “glory”.

### **Changing the promotion of football**

Participants in another group interview discussed the role of football and its changing profile within their school.

One major one - the masculinity of being a big tough man - especially with football. But there is also other sectors that teach you masculinity isn't only achieved through football, it is achieved through what kind of person you are, what your feelings are, how you act towards others.(Joshua)

... It is a bit of a stereotype when you come here, you play football, "It is a man's game" and that is the only understanding of masculinity that you know. Whereas you meet up with other sectors like through English, where you express yourself through writing. It is not really highlighted, no one really talks about that.(Damien)

I think football has settled back a little bit and other things have come through - like the debating and public speaking is more accepted now amongst the students.(Fred, Gp 10, 49-55)

Responses indicated that one of the two schools was perceived as easing some of its emphasis on the promotion of football. However, this was not the majority view amongst the participants interviewed.

### **Being an adult and being a man**

Eight participants (21%) answered referring to “adult”, “mature” and “responsible”. Some spoke about growing up as an adult rather than specifically as a man. The perception that the school is promoting responsibility is consistent with participants’ use of the same term in other answers reported in Chapters 4 and 5. One area for further investigation is teenage

boys’ understandings behind the language of becoming men and adults. It is unclear as to whether they perceive that the words “adult” and “men” are different or interchangeable.

## Summary

The aim of Question 7 was to investigate if the teenage boys interviewed perceived school as promoting one particular understanding or a number of understandings of masculinity. Participants were divided in their views as to whether the school promoted one particular understanding of masculinity, eighteen participants (47%), compared with seventeen students (45%), who stated that the school promoted a number of understandings of masculinity. Regardless of whether they viewed the school as promoting one or a number of understandings of masculinity, participants’ responses to Question 7 contained similar characteristics. Participants perceived the school as promoting involvement in school activities and responsible adult behaviour. Eighteen participants (47%) described the role of school in the promotion of achievement in sport. Part of Question 9 specifically asked participants about the influence of sport at school on their understanding of masculinity. This data is reported in 6.5.1 Sport.

## 6.4 Perceptions of the influence of school culture or spirit on their understanding of masculinity

Question 8 asked participants: “Does the culture or spirit of this school influence your understanding of masculinity? Please explain.” Table 6.3 summarises participants’ responses.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	87
Yes and no, mixed view	2	5
No	1	3
No answer	2	5
Total	38	100

Thirty three participants (87%) described school spirit and culture as influencing their understanding of masculinity. Thirty two participants’ responses were summarised in four themes: “singing and cheering”, “pride and loyalty”, “support” and “leadership”.

## **Singing and cheering**

Twelve participants (32%) described “singing and cheering” at Masses and sport as features of school spirit that influenced their understanding of masculinity. A characteristic of these responses was that participants tended to refer to both singing at Masses and cheering at sporting competitions. While this qualitative investigation did not set out to compare the two schools involved in the study, it is noted that students at St James were more likely to comment on the influence of singing in liturgies.

I remember when I came to St James you were really embarrassed about singing. At one of my first Masses, it was so loud, it was amazing. It was a bit of a shock. You looked round and see everyone singing! It's OK! (Dale, Int 1, 18)

Participants reported the influence of their peers and older students in setting expectations regarding acceptable behaviour in school events such as Masses and sporting events. Responses indicated that singing and cheering acted as a form of initiation into the accepted cultures of masculinity within one of the schools.

Singing and cheering provided opportunities for strengthening school spirit. Interviewees indicated that singing and cheering provided a vehicle for a corporate masculine identity linked to school spirit. Some participants included references to ex-students in their answers.

The spirit of the college is very very strong at this school. Even .... good friends that have left school a couple of years back, they can still remember the school Masses, the football games and the swimming carnivals because there is just so much energy coming out of the boys when all that is happening. (Graham, Gp 2, 71)

The previous participant expressed this experience of masculinity by referring to “energy coming out of the boys”. Another described it as the way “we all come together... with all the guys”.

Just the way we all come together, and that is school spirit. It makes you feel good actually to sit in Church as one with all the guys and sing up at Mass. I suppose that would effect masculinity of most boys. I mean just a week ago I was walking through the local shopping centre. I walked across the street there and these guys in a Combi van passed. They saw me in a school uniform and they started singing the war cry and school hymn outside the window. It showed that they had been influenced totally by St James and they haven't forgotten. ....

(Interviewer: Can you say more about the role of singing at Masses?)

It is making me more confident. Letting me know that I am a man, and I am confident to do this. And everyone else is doing it and you feel good about it. It gets you going, I suppose. (Owen, Int 6, 16)

Some participants nominated singing and cheering as an experience that enhanced their confidence.

I come here for the school knockout and just seeing everybody cheering you on, on the hill and it really uplifts you. It's the best feeling in the world people cheering you down that hill just getting into a footy game. I think just the spirit within the school .... has helped everybody as a whole. They can take that with them when they are finished at this school. (Joel, Gp 2, 69)

Another participant described his experience of group identity and power expressed in a cheering competition between his school and another school.

....Our team came out and then we cheered for St Mark's and then St Nathan's booted for them like the person who sort of cheered the loudest or booted the loudest, sort of feel like they'd won that, feel like we had power over them, feeling a bit more strong than the other side. (Keith, Gp 6, 57)

Students who use their power and refused to sing were perceived as acting in a way that they believed enhanced their masculinity.

I think some people look at it as being masculine if they don't sing. Saying I'm not singing that stupid song. And they just refuse to sing. (Anthony, Gp 3, 122)

“Singing and cheering” was viewed by participants as an important aspect of school spirit that influences their understanding of masculinity. This influence may be related to the way that “singing and cheering” can act as a socially acceptable means of forging a corporate masculine identity that is embraced by significant groups of students and ex-students.

### **Pride and loyalty**

Ten participants (26%) described “pride and loyalty” associated with both school and group membership. Some described the importance of pride associated with membership of the school community encompassing students, ex-students and parents.

This school is proud of itself. Out in the public you have to do what the school says otherwise you get into a lot of trouble. Like on a few occasions people have phoned up the school and said this person was doing the wrong thing, and because the public had got involved .... the person gets into trouble a lot. Especially the Principal now, he is a nice guy, but he doesn't like it when the community gets disappointed with the school. (Aziel, Gp 8, 83)

“Pride and loyalty” associated with membership of a peer group is a feature of school culture that these participants viewed as influencing their understanding of masculinity. Group membership can be based on diverse characteristics from ethnicity to sporting involvements. One participant described groups this way: “... Adidas group and the surfy group” (Ben, Gp 3, 137), another said “... Lebanese, Italian, Chinese and Australian. They don't normally mix with each other” (Thomas, Gp 3, 133). Interviewees reported that it was important to belong to a peer group.

There are not many individuals around the place. Everyone is always fitting into a group. People act the same way. (Anthony, Gp 3, 120)

### **Support**

Six participants (16%) described the school as providing “support” for students. Participants reported that they valued the school’s ability to “back everybody”. This feature of school culture influences their understanding of masculinity.

Yes, the school itself is just a big force that backs everybody. (Joshua, Gp 10, 58)

We give a lot of support to people to help them when they need it, to cheer them on. It is seen as acceptable..... (Aidan, Int 3, 17)

### **Leadership**

Four participants (11%) described senior students contributing “leadership” to the school.

Yes. As you get older when you get into the senior years you start to become the leaders of the school and like to the little Year 7s and people younger they sort of think that you are the man of the school. .... (Lance, Gp 11, 41)

Sort of happens without you realising it. All of a sudden we're in year 12 and I think those tiny year 7s are looking up to us. You don't feel so little anymore, you feel like you want to go ahead and lead. (Kane, Gp 11, 44)

Participants reported that this is a natural and inevitable process by which senior boys become the “man of the school” and “go ahead and lead”. They stated that this is a characteristic of their understanding of masculinity promoted by the culture of the school.

### **Summary**

The aim of Question 8 was to investigate if the teenage boys interviewed perceived the culture or spirit of the school as influencing their understanding of masculinity. Thirty three

participants (87%) indicated that school spirit was influential and the majority of responses were summarised in four themes: “singing and cheering”, “pride and loyalty”, “support” and “leadership”.

## 6.5 Perceptions of the influence of features of school life

Question 9 asked participants: “Please explain whether any of these features of school life have influenced your understanding of masculinity: sport, discipline and pastoral care, school subjects, religious events like Masses and retreats?” The reason for the selection of these aspects of school life was explained in Section 2.5. Responses to Question 9 will be reported in four separate sections: 6.5.1. Sport; 6.5.2. Discipline and Pastoral Care; 6.5.3. School Subjects; 6.5.4. Religious Events like Masses and Retreats.

### 6.5.1 Sport

Table 6.4 summarises participants’ responses to Question 9a which asked them to explain whether school sport influenced their understanding of masculinity. Thirty one participants (82%) agreed and explained the influence of sport.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	82
No	4	10
No answer	3	8
Total	38	100

Of the 31 participants who explained the influence of sport, 30 participants’ responses were reported in three themes: “A Man’s Game”, “Team Membership” and “Sporting Elite”.

#### A Man’s Game

Twelve participants (32%) identified the rugby league code of football as a “man’s game”. Both Catholic boys’ schools involved in the qualitative component of this study have long

histories of achievement in this code of football. Some explained that rugby league is viewed as a man's game because it is "rough" and "tough".

Probably football. It is a man's game, rough. Teamwork, you work with the rest of the team and not just yourself. (Samuel, Int 2, 18)

I think it does, because the stereotypes it creates. Like if anybody plays sport they are seen as a big man, they play sport, they are tough. But if you don't play sport or you are more inclined to academic pursuits you may not be seen as any less of a man but you are not a bigger man as if you played footy. I think it has declined to an extent but it is still there. (Lance, Gp 11, 50)

Teenage boys who participated in the interviews were acutely aware of the hierarchy of masculinities associated with a range of sports. Participants reported the school's preference in favour of "tough" "contact sports".

... like the school is really big on League. Like the tough sports. (John, Gp 5, 103)

They do offer us a variety of sports. A lot of them are kind of contact sports. Things that women wouldn't usually play. Showing toughness. (Nathan, Gp 5, 106)

The introduction of gymnastics at one of the schools resulted in some discussion but did not challenge prevailing attitudes about the hierarchy of sporting masculinities.

At our school, you know, you really choose sports which are like the tough guy image, you know, football or basketball or soccer, real sports, you can't do gymnastics on Thursday afternoon or you can't do anything like that. It's more like man's sports. (Will, Gp 7, 58)

Gymnastics. I didn't know we even had it. It's one of those really back door things. (Gavin, Gp 7, 60)

Whilst the profile of soccer has increased in both schools, this sport has yet to gain the same status as rugby league. Several interviewees analysed the profile of soccer which was their preferred football code.

For me, soccer was really low when I started playing in Year 8. Then it went up a bit when we won in 96. We still only had about 15 supporters at the grand final. They didn't even let the junior teams come. We didn't like it that much. But as the years got on we had more and more people, every year we had more teams getting in and its growing. (Joshua, Gp 10, 75)

Yes, say we tend to get into arguments between friends about ... soccer is a pussy sport and rugby league is a man's game. ... (Marco, Int 9, 39)

Participants reported that it is advantageous to be a good football player. It enhances image and enables a teenage boy to achieve success in an endeavour that is valued by the school.

I don't get knocked for not playing football, but I can see the sort of image you'd have if you did play football. (Lance, Gp 11, 55)

Regardless of its academic achievements St James is a great footy school. I'd find it hard if I wasn't part of sport, if I was here. (Fred, Gp 10, 67)

Achieving success in rugby league provided teenage boys with public recognition, and social acceptability in an activity regarded as a “man’s game” at the top of the hierarchy of sporting masculinities. Football codes are also valued because they are team games.

### **Team Membership**

Ten teenage boys interviewed (26%) reported the importance of team membership when they considered the influence of sport on their understanding of masculinity. A feature of team membership is the value of giving your best effort in support of your team mates and the school. Several interviewees described their perceptions of giving their “best”.

Last year on the touch football team we had a coach who wanted everyone to be like a team, like to work together and turn up to training and work hard, so like we could get somewhere. .... In sport the coaches see who turns up for training. .... they put them in the game, because they know they are the ones who are going to work hard in the game. In the match, you have to think about the game, take part and try your best. If you get hurt, keep trying, don't just give up so easy. (Peter Gp 4, 60)

...if you play to the best of your ability and the team tried really hard and they get beaten by 40 it doesn't matter. So that's it as long as you put in your best. The school supports us putting in our best. (Joel, Gp 2, 78)

The team environment provided by sport taught some of the participants about peers and teachers, “bonding” and responsibility. One interviewee explained that his experience of the Basketball team and the example provided by fellow student Bill Horden and his coaches was like “teaching”.

The way we all come together in the team, we all play together and we've got leaders. It is like a teaching thing really.

(Interviewer: Who does the teaching?)

You've got guys to look up to like Bill Horden, he is someone I look up to in the team. And then I look up to Mr Amory as well the coach, and there is Mr Ormond as well. We are influenced by each other, when we are playing the game, the way we are playing together in a team environment. (Owen, Int 6, 18)



One student viewed the celebration associated with making the final as a “big bonding session” that promoted friendship. Another described the importance of sport in learning about responsibility and masculinity.

Sport has a big part to do with it. Because we made the final, last night we went to Sizzlers it was a big bonding session happening. Everyone was joking around having a good time. A lot of people that didn't talk much during the year became good friends with other people. (Zac, Gp 8, 96)

Sport plays an important part in responsibility. Like turning up for training and listen to your coach that's part of growing up and responsibilities. (Aziel, Gp 8, 100)

### **Sporting Elite**

Eight participants (21%) reported that achievement in competitive sport results in recognition and high status within the hierarchy of student masculinities. This perception was repeated frequently in response to a range of questions. Some participants responded to Question 9 by describing the recognition granted by the schools to boys who achieve success as sporting representatives. Frequently, these participants asserted that the high profile given to success in sport was at the cost of public recognition of academic and other achievements.

It would be great to be really top in any sporting area, elite. That gets pushed here, the people that aren't so elite tend to be ignored. (Dale, Int 1, 20)

The school is basically sports-centred. Mr Barton, the Principal, is kind of focused on sports. He is coach of a couple of our teams and intellectual, academic comes as a sort of afterthought. Most of the assemblies that we have, he is always congratulating some sports team. ...[If you] did really well in the Maths competition they only happen once a year. (Nathan, Gp 5, 119)

### **Sport is unimportant**

Sport itself, not really. Just enjoyable and to get fit. (Yunis, Gp 6, 45)

This statement is representative of the four participants (10%) who stated that they did not believe school sport influenced their understanding of masculinity.

### **Summary**

Thirty one participants (82%) explained why they perceived sport as influential. Their responses indicated that schools' implementation of sporting activities is an important way teenage boys gain understanding about masculinity.

## 6.5.2 Discipline and Pastoral Care

Table 6.5: Responses to Question 9b Discipline and Pastoral Care Please explain whether any of these features of school life have influenced your understanding of masculinity: discipline and pastoral care.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	92
No	1	3
No answer	2	5
Total	38	100

Thirty five participants (92%) viewed discipline and pastoral care procedures as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. Their responses are reported in four themes: “Relationships with Teachers”, “Strict Discipline”, “A Learning Process” and “Big Man”.

### Relationships with Teachers

Twelve participants (32%) reported on their relationships with teachers in explaining the influence of discipline on their understanding of masculinity. Several participants stated that students “rebel against teachers” because discipline is a struggle for power.

... students will always try to rebel against teachers .... trying to look big whatever as if no one is going to tell them what to do.... (Marco, Int 9, 45)

Others identified the importance of teacher relationship and communication in the enforcement of discipline.

Every time you get into trouble the teacher always talks to you. They never just [say] “Go here, you are in trouble, here is the detention”. They always talk to you. So you understand what you are getting in trouble for.(Graham, Gp 2, 88)

There is evidence from the interview data that participants are willing to accept school discipline policies if teachers administer them with fairness and listen to the views of the students.

### Strict Discipline

Nine teenage boys interviewed (24%) regarded the discipline at both schools as “strict”. Some characterised the operation of school discipline as “always demanding” (John, Gp5, 138). Others described the discipline system as having a positive influence on their developing self understanding as responsible students and future workers.

.....that's why I think this school is great because a lot of boys can get sorted out here. I'm the person I am today because a lot of this discipline helped out. (Joel, Gp 2, 90)

It's going to be more strict in the workforce. (Sean, Gp 4, 72)

There was a range of views on the benefits of “strict” discipline. Some participants described the role of rigorous discipline in teaching the students how to comply with school rules.

### **A Learning Process**

Nine participants (24%) perceived discipline as part of the accepted “learning process” at school: “Learn from your mistakes...” (Samuel, Int 2, 22). These participants stated the view that the school discipline system was a legitimate attempt to modify the behaviour of students who did not comply with school rules.

Well it is fair. If you do something wrong you pay the price, and you accept it. (Aidan, Int 3, 23)

### **Big Man**

Five participants (13%) reported that students viewed receiving punishments in the discipline system as a way of appearing as a “big man” to their peers. One described sanctions as “trophies to their friends” (Thomas, Gp3, 120). This perception was associated with the early years of secondary school where students are more likely to view detention notifications as a way of enhancing their status.

Yes. When you are on the bus you see the junior grades hand around their detention slips and say “I got this one”. I'm a big man because I got a detention to their friends... It builds up your image. (Lance, Gp 11, 59)

When I was in Year 8 I got a weekend detention to come back on the pupil free day on the Monday. The day after that I had all the Year 12 kids on the bus pat me on the back [saying] “Big man”. It made me feel good. It made me feel a bit bigger. (Kane, Gp 11, 65)

### **Summary**

The majority of the teenage boys interviewed perceived school disciplinary practices as an influence on their understanding of masculinity. The application of discipline by the school provided experiences that were perceived as both positive and negative by the students. The

responses indicated awareness that discipline is an essential characteristic of both schools. Participants viewed discipline as an important expression of power. Only one student described an aspect of a teacher relationship and pastoral care at school. All other answers responded to “discipline” rather than “pastoral care” which both featured in the question.

### 6.5.3 School Subjects

Table 6.6: Responses to Question 9c school subjects Please explain whether any of these features of school life have influenced your understanding of masculinity: school subjects.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	71
No	4	11
No answer	7	18
Total	38	100

Twenty seven participants (71%) stated that school subjects had influenced their understanding of masculinity. Their responses are reported in four themes named as: “Masculinity in the Curriculum”, “Classroom Behaviour”, “Responsibility” and “Gender and the Curriculum”.

#### Masculinity in the Curriculum

Fourteen participants (37%) named school subjects that contributed to their understanding of masculinity. The most frequently nominated course was Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. The participants viewed PDHPE as important because it is associated with physical development, muscular strength, sexuality and sporting achievement.

I think that is one of the most important, as each subject expresses different types of masculinity .... like PE, sport we were talking more of a muscular competitive view of masculinity. Subjects like Business Studies or RE actually brings out the actual mental side or self-esteem. (Romano, Gp 1, 71)

Participants reported that Religious Education contributes to self-esteem and spirituality; Science and Biology to knowledge of anatomy and that a number of other academic subjects contribute to the intellectual dimension of their understanding of masculinity. The role of English in the curriculum received comment as follows.

Students at St Mark's College referred to the unit of work on women, power and violence studied in English. This unit was mentioned in answering this question and others. One participant reported:

English now would have the most [influence] on us as we are doing Women and Power and Violence. And that has taught us about men and how they treated them back then. And it tells us how times are changing now. So that influences us more. When you are a man you have to help your wife, no violence at all in your house to your wife or kids. It is equal power not just men. (Kristoff, Gp 9, 49)

The teenage boys participating in the study were aware of the contradictory messages they received about emotional expression. They perceived that PDHPE required them not to "show emotions" but this was necessary in English "to write emotions".

These would be the two main subjects - contradiction there as PE is more masculine, be a man thing, don't show any pain, or don't show emotions. But English in poetry they teach you to write emotions. (Damien, Gp 10, 77)

Further research is needed to understand how teenage boys resolve the conflicting demands of teachers and the curriculum regarding the expression of emotions.

### **Classroom behaviour**

Eight participants (21%) described classroom behaviour and discipline when speaking about how school subjects influenced their understanding of masculinity. Several reported that students aim to do no work and "prove that you hate teachers" (Nathan, Gp 5, 131).

The general idea seems to be to talk back to the teachers, don't do any work, and be a smart arse in the period and being hard and funny. (Dale, Int 1, 22)

Another student described the way he and his fellow students viewed teachers and their power.

When we get the woman teacher, the substitute teacher, we just go berserk, like they've got no power. Here we are, with friends behind us .... you want your reputation, again you tend to muck up a bit. There are some female teachers that are fairly strong and that you have to listen to them or they'll kill you. Then there are some that just have no power whatsoever. (Simon, Gp 8, 108)

These students are representative of participants who viewed the influence of school subjects on their understanding of masculinity, not in terms of the actual curriculum, but more in terms of classroom behaviour. The classroom was perceived as a venue for students to assert their collective power.

## Responsibility

Three participants (8%) described different features of learning, including taking responsibility for their subject choice decisions as “pretty masculine”; and the importance of classroom learning influenced their understanding of student masculinities. One described how a “nerd” became an esteemed member of the peer group.

Before in Year 7 they would say “Nerd, nerd”, but now you are saying, “I wish I could be like this guy. I reckon he is going to have a good career”. Like he is on the path. You want to achieve, you don't want to be stupid anymore. (Ben, Gp 3, 155)

## Gender and curriculum

Two participants (5%) described the gender dimension of the curriculum in the two all boys’ schools. However, both students provided different observations. One recognised the pattern of subjects studied at his school as being different to a school for girls. While another stated an opposite view: “girls’ schools [do] the same subjects”. (John, Gp 5, 128)

We don't have something like home ec, that would be more on the feminine side. English is not really big at this school. Maths is. (Aidan, Int 3, 21)

## Summary

The majority of students interviewed stated that school subjects were influential on their understanding of masculinity. The largest theme of affirmative responses described particular perceptions of masculinity that they associated with individual school subjects.

### 6.5.4 Religious Events like Masses and Retreats

Table 6.7: Responses to Question 9d Religious Events like Masses and Retreats. Please explain whether any of these features of school life have influenced your understanding of masculinity: religious events like Masses and retreats		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	68
No	11	29
Unsure	1	3
Total	38	100

Twenty six participants (68%) stated that religious events like Retreats and Masses have influenced their understanding of masculinity. Retreats are live in camps that aim at promoting personal reflection, spirituality and good relationships with staff and students.

Masses are Eucharistic liturgies of the Catholic Church. Retreats and Masses are features of the religious life of Catholic secondary schools. Participants' responses are reported in five themes: "Retreats and self understanding", "Retreats and understanding others", "Retreat Activities", "No experience of Retreats" and "Masses". Numbers of participants are not stated due to the large number of responses that are reported in more than one theme.

### **Retreats and self understanding**

Teenage boys interviewed described retreats as providing an opportunity for increased self understanding and structured personal reflection.

I think it has opened my eyes a bit. These retreats make you sit back and really take a look at your life. You always come back that little bit more mature. One more step towards a man. (Fred, Gp 10, 94)

...You understand yourself more. (Kevin, Int 5, 24)

### **Retreats and understanding others**

Retreats provided opportunities for participants to relate to their peers in an environment where they feel less under threat or scrutiny.

The retreat this year we got to really know each other a lot better and you've got to show yourself to other people, your real self. (Graham, Gp 2, 93)

You see sides of other people that you don't normally see. I have a hell of a lot more friends now because of those retreats. ... It boost my self esteem and makes me feel more relaxed and confident with other people. I feel it is more easier to get to know people [in] the group environments of the retreats. (Owen, Int 6, 24)

Especially retreats, they bring you closer to everyone else, bring out what you actually feel without having other people around that is actually going to mock you about feeling better about yourself.(Romano)

Get something off your chest without torment.(Tomas)

.... it forms that special bond between student and teacher. (Romano, Gp 1, 83-86)

The interview data indicates that participants viewed retreats as a reprieve from the normal constraints of peer group hierarchies and the regular teacher student relations. They described retreats as an opportunity to experience a sense of unity that encompasses both students and teachers.

....we got to be just men, all equal. (Scott, Int 8, 51)

The Year 12 retreat this year ... before they went they weren't as a group they were more individuals. But when they went to retreat and they came back they acted more like a unit, like a group. (Joshua, Gp 10, 91)

### **Retreat activities**

Participants described particular aspects of retreat activities including discussing in small groups and working on tasks to promote group cohesion.

especially when you are in your little groups and that you display who you are and what you thought and how you could improve yourselves is really good... (Joel, Gp 2, 95)

... it gets you involved, like everyone had a go and no one was laughing at anyone if they made a mistake. (Will, Gp 7, 73)

One participant described a ritual of friendship and healing conducted during a time of prayer and reflection.

What happened was we had the bucket of water and you had to dip walk over to a person and dip their hands in it. ....It just shows that it is not a masculine thing to go up and say I want to be your friend a bit more. It took a bucket of water, the symbolism, to actually do it. It was a good idea. (Aidan, Int 3, 25)

This explanation is representative of other participants who stated that they valued sharing with peers within the context of understanding and support provided by retreat activities.

### **No experience of retreats**

There were participants from St Mark's College who had never experienced a retreat.

We haven't had our Retreats yet, they are next term. (Alex, Gp 7, 71)

This had an impact on the pattern of participants' responses. Each of the eleven interviewees who indicated religious events like Masses and retreats had no influence on their understanding of masculinity were from St Mark's College. Interviewees were unable to comment on the influence of retreats if they had not participated in this type of educational experience.

### **Masses**

Eight participants (21%) specifically nominated that school Masses were an influence on their understanding of masculinity.



Here, [Mass] is more involved. Here it seems like we shout it! You just play the drums, hit the music. It sounds more like rock and roll, but down at the Church it sounds more like a Church. And this is the more masculine thing. It would be difficult for everyone to sing in the high voice so it is done in the deep loud baritone voice (Aidan, Int 3, 29)

... and Masses ... it's something to get more in touch with my God and it's really helped me during life, given me a new perspective on things. (Gavin, Gp 7, 74)

Interview data indicated a diversity of participants' views on school Masses as an influence on masculinity. Eleven participants (29%) stated that Religious Events, Masses and retreats were not influential and eight participants (21%) expressed the opposite perception.

### Summary

Twenty six participants (68%) reported that religious events were influential on their understanding of masculinity. The majority of participants who nominated retreats were complimentary about the positive role of these programs. Retreats attracted no negative comments. Masses received fewer comments. Participants expressed a broad range of perceptions when evaluating the role of Mass.

## 6.6 Participants' satisfaction with the ways masculinity is portrayed in their school

Question 10 asked participants: "Are you satisfied with the ways that masculinity is portrayed in your school? Why? Why not? Are any changes necessary in your school?"

Table 6.8 provides a summary of responses.

Table 6.8: Responses to Question 10.		
Are you satisfied with the ways that masculinity is portrayed in your school? Why? Why not? Are any changes necessary in your school?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	19	50
Dissatisfied	9	24
Unsure	8	21
No answer	2	5
Total	38	100

## **Satisfied**

Nineteen students interviewed (50%) expressed satisfaction with the way masculinity was portrayed at their school. Participants explained their satisfaction using a variety of reasons including: good relationships with teachers, discipline and values of the school.

Again I think it is all rounded cos you've got female teachers, male teachers and Brothers. You see all areas: teachers who are single, married and divorced. .... I think that it does effect your understanding. I think it is good. (Kevin, Int 5, 26)

The teachers look up to us as not kids but not as adults as well. The in between stage, adolescence. There is more control and discipline at St James which is good, because you develop respect for each other. (Fred, Gp 10, 105)

## **Dissatisfied**

Participants expressed a significant level of dissatisfaction and uncertainty regarding how their school portrayed masculinity. Nine participants (24%) stated that they were dissatisfied and eight participants (21%) said they were unsure. One aspect of schooling that received negative comment from several interviewees was teacher expectations regarding behaviour: "They don't treat you like a man...." (Samuel, Int2, 16). The majority of critical responses described the profile given to sport by the school. Frequently, participants recommended school review its perceived priorities.

Take some focus off the sport. And give everybody a chance. ... A lot of academic people don't do sport. ... It's pushing them out of the focus the spotlight. (Nathan, Gp 5, 157)

People's attitudes really have to change, like if you get involved in a chess comp you are seen as a nerd. If you get involved in rugby you are seen as a big macho person, it's more along the traditional lines of how a man is supposed to act and think. (Gavin, Gp 7, 77)

## **6.7 Participants' views on the choice of this school for their sons**

Question 11 asked participants: "If you had a son, would you send him to this school? Why? Why not?" Table 6.9 summarises participants' responses.

Table 6.9: Responses to Question 11. If you had a son, would you send him to this school? Why? Why not?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	74
No	5	13
Unsure	5	13
Total	38	100

The majority of participants, 28 students (74%), expressed the view that they would send their son to this school. The stated reasons included satisfaction experienced by the boys and their parents with their school.

Yea, I think so. I would send him to this school or a school like it. I just know that my parents are happy. They are proud of me being here. I feel proud that they want me here. I am doing quite well at school and I feel good about being here really.  
(Owen, Int 6, 28)

Many participants referred to features of schooling that had been discussed previously when evaluating school influences on masculinity. One stated: “teachers are good, .... there is no real bullying going on.” (Marco, Int 9, 53). Another identified the contribution of sport to maturity: “I want my kids to grow up through sport....” (Fred, Gp 10, 108).

Ten interviewees (26%) said that they were unsure or against sending their son to this school. This comment is representative of the views expressed by the ambivalent participants. “....It is very strict. This is good in some ways, bad in others.” (Guy, Int 7, 28)

## **6.8 Discussion of teenage boys’ perceptions of the influence of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity**

### **6.8.1 Culture of masculinity within two Catholic boys’ schools**

Participants described aspects of a prevailing culture of masculinity operating within the two Catholic boys’ schools that provided interviewees for the study. Whilst there was no attempt to compare schools, however, there was significant commonality between the perceptions of teenage boys from both schools. The aim of this section of the discussion will be to interpret student perceptions of the culture of masculinity within the school and integrate relevant insights from other research.

There is agreement within the research literature that schools make an important contribution to the construction of masculinity (Heward, 1988; Beynon, 1989; Angus, 1993; Mac an Ghail, 1994; and Connell, 1996). The findings of the qualitative component of this study are consistent with this view. Thirty five participants (92%) in this study agreed that school had influenced their understanding of masculinity. Interviewees described characteristics of the culture of masculinity that operated in their school. Table 6.10 summarises common features of the masculinities perceived by the participants as present within their school. The perceptions were common to both case study schools.

1.	Peers and many teachers promoted the value of toughness. There was an alternative value of emotional expressiveness promoted by some teachers and in some areas of curriculum such as English.
2.	Responsibility was a constituent part of school endorsed masculinity.
3.	Participation by teenage boys in the sporting life of the school was a valued way for students to assert their masculinity.
4.	Achievement at school was based on either sporting or academic masculinities. School structures promoted sporting achievement.
5.	The boys and the schools valued a 'spirituality of connected masculinity' which can find expression in sport and retreats.
6.	"Protest masculinities" (Connell, 2000) were demonstrated by some students in response to enforcement of school discipline.

The characteristics summarised in Table 6.10 may not necessarily be present in other boys' schools. However, this summary lists important features of masculinity and schooling that might be examined further in research. It was noted in Section 6.2 that participants perceived some influences as being related to the single sex culture of the schools. Their presence in other school contexts such as coeducational schools is also an area for future investigation. Connell (1996) claimed that gender influences expectations and relationships in all schools.

Connell (1996) proposed that four types of relationships are part of the school's gender regime: patterns of emotion; power relations; division of labour; symbolisation. The responses of interviewees highlighted the contribution of two of the types of relationships described by Connell: patterns of emotion and power relations. Participants' responses indicated that they perceived different patterns of emotion were appropriate in particular school situations. Some students described different "feeling rules" for sport and English.

Power relations were acknowledged in the enforcement of discipline. The role of teachers in setting expectations about expression of emotion, highlighted in Chapter 5, was also discussed by interviewees when considering aspects of school experience. For example, one participant perceived a connection between masculinity, power and control:

When I look at the high ranked teachers: the Principal and especially the Deputies they are really up tight, they never look like they are relaxed. So they are saying to be a man you have to be in control. .... (Nicholas, Int 4, 14)

Connell (1996) proposed three masculinity vortices: boys' subjects; discipline and sport. Sport and discipline were important aspects of school experience and masculinity for participants in this study. The gender expectations associated with "boys' subjects" described by Connell were not perceived by the participants in this study as influential. Mac an Ghail (1994) stated that schooling masculinities operate at institutional and peer group levels. The views of participants were in accord with those reported by Mac an Ghail. They perceived that key schooling masculinities based on sporting and academic achievement were expressed institutionally and in peer groups. Mac an Ghail (1994) believed that masculinities at school marginalised homosexual students and students in ethnic minorities. Participants made very few responses referring to sexuality, ethnicity and masculinity in this study.

### **6.8.2 Dividing sporting and academic masculinities**

The teenage boys who participated in this study perceived that masculinity at school was expressed by achievement in sporting and academic endeavours. Participants described a division between two 'opposing' masculinities. The responses of participants indicated that many perceived achievement as either "sporting" or "academic". There was limited comment indicating it was possible to have a masculinity based on achieving in both sporting and academic pursuits. Achievement in both masculinities was identified by one interviewee as a largely unattainable ideal.

#### **Character of two masculinities**

Table 6.11 summarises the interviewees' perceptions of sporting and academic masculinities. This is followed by an analysis of the literature related to the participants' perception of two approaches to masculinity.

1.	High level achievement in both competitive sport and academic results is both rare and desired.
2.	Success in sports such as football and cricket is valued by the school and receives public acclamation.
3.	School assemblies regularly feature sporting achievement. Success in academic endeavours such as examinations, Mathematics competitions, and debating lack the same consistently high profile accorded sport.
4.	Other sports beyond rugby league are receiving support from the schools. Soccer was viewed as gaining acceptance at one school. Introduction of gymnastics at the second school was perceived as tokenistic.
5.	Achievement in sports such as football is valued because it is associated with having a tough, muscular style of masculinity endorsed by media and peers.
6.	Teenage boys pursue peer acceptance and recognition through either a sporting masculinity or an academic masculinity.
7.	No participant reported any attempt by schools to challenge boys' perceptions that the majority of boys need to focus on sporting or academic masculinities.

Connell (1996) asserted that schooling functions to emphasise differences between masculinities. He described an active process that defines some students as successes and others as failures. Willis (1977) stated that one group of students used school as a pathway for careers and a second group went from school to factory work. The attitudes towards education were influenced by their conformity to socially accepted masculinities. Mac an Ghail (1994) described four peer groups in his study. Two of the four are described as the "Macho Lads" and "Academic Achievers". There are some similarities with the perceptions of participants in this study regarding sporting and academic masculinities. The most important similarity was that orientation to schooling can be a valuable way of classifying student masculinities. There was no evidence in the current study to indicate the existence of four clearly defined peer groups. However, participants used the division between sporting and academic masculinities to characterise student patterns of school achievement. While participants described the role of peer groups there was no evidence of a more elaborate division of students according to school orientation as reported by Mac an Ghail (1994).

An important feature of this research is the perception of the teenage boys in the study that there are two ways they can assert their masculinity. There is a need for further research to investigate whether other teenage boys have similar perceptions and to understand how schools can best respond. Laberge and Albert (1999) reported the importance of social class as a factor influencing teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. Participants in the current

study were “middle class”, and this may have influenced their perception of achievement through their sporting or academic masculinities. Chapter 7 will examine some of the implications for schools of participants’ perceptions of masculinity and how educators can promote achievement that recognises individual differences.

## **Football**

The major football code in both schools, rugby league, was perceived as the prime representative of school sporting masculinities. Interviewees spoke of football in a way that indicated participation in this sport was like a pathway to a widely accepted form of masculinity within the culture of the school. Other sports received comment from participants including, cricket, golf, soccer, basketball and gymnastics. However, involvement in rugby league football was associated with toughness, competition and attributes of hegemonic masculinity. Responses of some participants tended to be in accord with the views of Dutton (1995) and Light and Kirk (2002) that through football the body becomes associated with domination and power. Interviewees also reported that successful footballers were granted privilege and high social status in the school. This perception is in line with the findings of other published studies including Lesko (2000), Connell (1996), and Messner (1992).

Participants identified the role of success in football as a way of promoting school identity and spirit. One Principal was reported as encouraging students to play football and take forward the sporting tradition of the school. The other school was perceived as being so keen to support major first grade matches that lessons were cancelled so all students could be present and cheer for the team. Some participants reported that cheering and singing at sporting fixtures enhanced their understanding of masculinity through their sense of unity with their peers and the school. Each of these responses contributed to the perceptions of the interviewees that football was important to the school and that it promoted a masculinity based on competition and elite achievement. This view is similar to those of Lingard and Douglas (1999), Connell (1996), Salisbury and Jackson (1996).

Participants evaluated the hegemony of rugby league. The profile of other sports such as soccer, golf, gymnastics and basketball, and other activities such as public speaking and debating has increased according to the participants. Many interviewees spoke of the value of participation in football and other team games in terms that were similar to those used by

Pollack (1998). There was little evidence that the two schools were implementing alternative approaches to sport as proposed by Salisbury and Jackson (1996). However, the esteem with which some coaches were viewed by participants indicated that some coaches are promoting respectful behaviour in ways similar to those proposed by Fitzclarence and Hickey (2000).

### **Learning and school subjects**

Participants' responses indicated that it was not easy for most teenage boys to assert a socially accepted masculinity through achieving success in learning school subjects. Achievement in academic endeavours was less likely to receive positive public recognition. School assemblies were reported to highlight sporting successes more frequently than classroom achievement. Academically oriented extra-curricular activities such as public speaking, debating, and 'mock trial' competitions, involve fewer participants, limited spectators and featured less frequently at school assemblies. Evidence emerging from the interview data may indicate that lower perceived profile of success in academic activities may contribute to the disinterest of boys in classroom learning. It may be that teenage boys are less likely to strive to achieve in school subjects and classroom learning if they see this as part of a less prestigious masculinity. This was a factor in the studies by Willis (1977) and Mac an Ghail (1994). While the current study did not aim to investigate the relationship between teenage boys' achievement and their perceptions of masculinity, this is an area that merits further research.

### **6.8.3 Spirituality of connected masculinity**

#### **Youth spirituality and teenage boys**

The Literature Review identified that there was a range of academic writing related to the field of teenage boys, masculinity and spirituality. As stated in Section 2.5.5, most research in this area has examined youth spirituality as a whole without specifically focusing on teenage boys. There are few reports of empirical research but other writers have identified aspects of spirituality relevant to teenage boys and masculinity. These studies help to provide points of reference in discussing the responses of the participants.



Webber (2002) claimed that many young people in Australia have little interest in formal church attendance but are seeking other ways to nurture their quest for spirituality and meaning. The qualitative component of this study asked interviewees one question about the influence of school organised religious activities on their understanding of masculinity. However, responses to other questions indicated that some teenage boys perceived a spiritual dimension to masculinity. For example, interviewees reported that school experiences such as retreats, singing and cheering influenced their understanding of masculinity.

### **Identifying a spirituality of connected masculinity**

Increasing numbers of writers have used the words “connected”, “connection” and “connectedness” to explain the nature of spirituality experienced by young people in general and teenage boys in particular. Some have described the action parents and others ought to take to promote connection and spirituality. This part of the literature is concerned with interpretation and proposed action, and not with empirical studies.

Carr-Gregg and Shale (2002) considered that young people need to feel connected in order to develop a sense of emotional wellbeing. They identified spirituality as one aspect of connection. Carr-Gregg and Shale argued that parents need to foster the spirituality of their teenage children through ritual, conversations regarding meaning, as well as promoting self-expression and engagement with nature.

The importance of emotional connection and the inner life of teenage boys was asserted by Pollack (1998), and Kindlon and Thompson (1999). They described the contribution of adults to the development of boys’ self-understanding and capacity to communicate truths about their spirituality, thoughts, feelings and beliefs. In his subsequent publication, Pollack (2000) stated that adults need to encourage the spiritual connections of boys. Dimensions of this included: boys engaging in personal practices such as prayer and meditation; conversing openly about spirituality and adults participating with boys in ritual and worship.

Gurian (1999) and Rohr (1998) both addressed aspects of a connected spirituality for teenage boys that was similar to the cosmic or transcendent youth spirituality identified by Tacey (1999). Rohr (1998) advocated that teenage boys need to experience a ritual of initiation so they can access collective spiritual wisdom and form a sacred cosmology of meaning.

Gurian (1999) proposed that teenage boys be taught about the cosmos, mythology, archetypes as well as clan and family stories.

The language of spirituality can be applied to interpret the responses of participants who spoke of a meaning dimension to their understanding of masculinity. Interviewees spoke of “*brotherhood*” among the students, “*unity*” on school retreats that brought students “*closer*”, “*bonding*” through sport and liturgy. There is evidence of a spiritual dimension to the masculinity desired by teenage boys. One way of conceptualising this is the participants’ search for a ‘Spirituality of Connected Masculinity’. Table 6.12 summarises this construct.

Dimension	Features
Inner dimension	Self-acceptance, sense of connection with a positive self image as a teenage boy, young man
Outer dimension	Affirmation from others, sense of connection with others who enhance my spirituality and identity as a teenage boy, young man.
Mythic dimension	Connection with foundational beliefs about meaning, masculine archetypes and the place of a teenage boy, young man within the cosmos.

There is need for more research to consider the merit and applicability of the concept of connected masculinity as a way of understanding teenage boys’ spirituality. However, it offers an integrated concept that incorporates mythic (Tacey, 1999; Gurian, 1999; Rohr, 1998) as well as inner and outer dimensions (Pollack, 1998; Kindlon and Thompson, 1999). Nye and Hay (1998) described relational consciousness that they found was central to the spirituality of children. A spirituality of connected masculinity may have a similar role for teenage boys. Chapter 7 will consider some educational implications of teenage boys’ search for a spirituality that provides authentic connections to their understanding of masculinity.

## 6.9 Summary

Chapter 6 reported and discussed responses to questions regarding participants’ perceptions of the influence of school experiences on their understanding of masculinity. This was the

third and final chapter describing particular aspects of teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. Interviewees' responses to a series of questions on the influence of schooling were analysed by the constant comparative method and reported thematically (see Section 3.4). Section 6.8 discussed features of schooling that emerged as significant following analysis of the interview data and consideration of the literature. The final chapter looks at conclusions of the study and at recommendations for education and for further research.

# **Chapter 7**

## **Conclusion: Findings and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter reports the conclusions of the study. It is organised in three sections: findings (7.2), strengths of the study and contribution to research (7.3), and recommendations for further research (7.4). Chapter 7 integrates the outcomes of both literature review and qualitative investigation components of the study on teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity.

### **7.2 Findings**

Chapter 1, Section 1.2 described the four main objectives that summarise the purpose of the study. This section of Chapter 7 will examine the findings in the light of these objectives.

#### **7.2.1 Objective 1: Analyse the literature on masculinity related to schooling and teenage boys**

The analysis of the literature on masculinity related to schooling and teenage boys led to four main conclusions listed under the following headings: rapidly expanding literature in this area; conflicting views on masculinity; contribution of qualitative research; research informing practice.

##### **Rapidly expanding literature in this area**

The academic literature on masculinity related to schooling and teenage boys has grown significantly over the last three decades. The study by Willis (1977) of working class masculinities, that investigated the contribution of school to the identity of teenage boys in Britain, marked the beginning of new field of academic interest studying the intersection of schooling, masculinities and teenage boys. His study was seminal, the first in a new frontier of educational research. Subsequently, researchers including Mac an Ghail (1994), Connell (1996, 2000), Laberge and Albert (1999), West (1999, 2002), Martino (1998, 2001) have analysed masculinity in order to increase understanding of its expression by teenage boys within school settings. The present study has sought to develop some perspective on this expanding literature to better inform educational practice. A major review of research and a

synthesis of issues and ideas where masculinities and education intersect remains an important need for educational planning and practice as far as boys' education is concerned.

### **Conflicting views on masculinity**

Important issues are contested by researchers including: educational needs of boys; reasons for the current level of interest in boys and education; goals and strategies of specialist programs for boys; role of sport and boys' achievement. Conflicting views on masculinity arise from different philosophical stances that inform research. Lingard and Douglas (1999) characterised two approaches: pro-feminist and recuperative masculinist. They made an important contribution: analysing assumptions underlying debates on masculinity. Lingard and Douglas described their interest in boys, masculinity and schooling as an expression of their pro-feminist concern for the promotion of gender equity and social justice. They asserted that the recuperative or mythopoetic essentialist masculinist approach lacks commitment to gender equity and views boys as the new disadvantaged. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) critiqued the current interest in boys' education but provided limited detail on their alternative strategies. Salisbury and Jackson (1996) succeeded in addressing assumptions about masculinity as well as outlining practical ways of working with teenage boys. They demonstrated it is possible to implement boys' education initiatives in ways that recognise the concerns of both philosophical stances. Catholic schools are able to attend to the educational needs of boys while enhancing gender equity. This study highlighted that schooling for boys can promote alternatives to hegemonic masculinity.

### **Contribution of qualitative investigation**

The literature review highlighted the important contribution that qualitative investigations have made in clarifying relationships between teenage boys, masculinity and school. Laberge and Albert (1999) highlighted the influence of social class on boys' perceptions of masculinity. They applied Connell's (1995) paradigm of views of hegemonic masculinity, proposing that upper and middle class boys were more likely to describe transformative views on masculinity. Phoenix and Frosh (2001) illustrated younger teenage boys' views of 'popular' boys expanding research on hegemonic masculinity. Their study demonstrated that hegemonic understandings work against younger adolescent males developing 'alternative' and 'relational' masculinities. Jackson (2002) asserted that the elaborate self-

worth protection strategies used by teenage boys reinforces 'resistant' masculinities and under achievement at school. Each of these studies highlighted the contribution of qualitative investigations to the understanding of the relationships between teenage boys, masculinity and schooling. The current study with its emphasis on the language used by students in Catholic boys' schools assisted in interpreting perceptions of masculinity. It provided an addition to the research on masculinity in schools evaluated in the literature review.

### **Research informing practice**

The literature review stressed the need for closer relationships between research and practice. The significant growing interest in the broader community regarding the education of boys needs to be informed by research. To some extent, this is evident in recent research-based publications aimed at this wider audience beyond the university based research community. Examples include the report on the boys' education inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training (2002) and the publication of the periodical *The Boys in Schools Bulletin* as well as books by West (2002), Hawkes (2001) and Biddulph (1998). The present study, and research such as that of Salisbury and Jackson (1996), has been directed towards teachers and other educational professionals who are interested in applying research to the education of boys. Salisbury and Jackson's (1996) publication is valuable because it provides an accessible summary of prominent research and then outlines practical strategies for use with boys. Above it was suggested that there is an important need for reviews which provide a critical synthesis of research findings. Similarly, there is a need for more writing and research that explore the implications for educational programs.

## **7.2.2 Objective 2: Investigate teenage boys' understanding of masculinity**

### **Teenage boys explain their understanding**

The teenage boys interviewed demonstrated a capacity to reflect upon their understanding of masculinity. They were aware that there are different perspectives on what it means to be a man in contemporary Australian society. There were indications that involvement in the interview process may have helped some of the adolescents to articulate and clarify their thoughts on masculinity. The responses elicited through the qualitative component of this

study highlighted the suitability of individual and group interviews as a method of investigating the views of teenage boys on masculinity.

### **Hegemonic masculinity and emerging understandings of masculinity**

Interviewees perceived masculinity as both stable and changing. Many participants described masculinity in language that is associated with hegemonic masculinity. Men were perceived as “*dominant*”, “*traditional*”, “*in charge*” hegemonic descriptions, implying that some men embrace a masculinity that is stable and consistent from one generation to the next. An alternative view was also expressed: that masculinity is changing and men need to be more emotionally expressive. Community expectations have moved and the behaviour and self-understanding are under a pressure to change. While previous generations tended to expect family men to be breadwinners, many of today’s teenage boys expect family men to be more present in the home as well as providing an income. This study showed signs that some teenage boys were discerning about which model of masculinity might be appropriate for them as adults. However, this view may be influenced by social class: Laberge and Albert (1999) found that middle and upper class boys were more likely to expressive transformative views on masculinity.

### **Few comments on sexuality when discussing masculinity**

A feature of this study was a minimal reference to sexuality when responding to the full range of interview questions. This is in contrast to Mac an Ghail (1994) who reported the importance of sexuality in understanding teenage school boys’ perceptions of masculinity. Mac an Ghail asserted that homosexual students were marginalised because their sexuality placed them in conflict with their peers’ perceptions of appropriate masculinities. Participants in the current study did not speak about sexuality when stating their perceptions. There are some possible explanations for this absence. No interview question specifically addressed sexuality because this was outside the scope of the study. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) reviewed research on this area and suggested that homophobia enforces the message that heterosexuality is compulsory at school. It remains to be determined whether homosexual and heterosexual boys have significantly different views of masculinity.

## **Influences on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity**

The teenage boys in this study were acutely aware of many influences on their understanding of masculinity. They perceived people, experiences and institutions working on their developing understandings of masculine identity. The contribution of family members, particularly parents, was perceived as significant. Many participants noted the contribution of their fathers as well as uncles and brothers. Teachers and school was perceived as influential by over half of the interviewees. As discussed below, this underlines the importance of schooling and education in the shaping of young people's understanding of masculinity. Peers, friends, media and sporting stars were viewed as having a role in forming their understandings of masculinity.

### **7.2.3 Objective 3: investigate teenage boys' perceptions of the influence of teachers and school experiences on their understanding of masculinity**

#### **Teachers influence masculinity**

Teachers were viewed as influencing the participants' understanding of masculinity. They provided accessible examples of how men and women function as adults in contemporary society. Men and women teachers provided reference points that could assist teenage boys in their developing understanding of their identity as young men. They perceived male teachers as embodying particular masculinities. Verbal and non verbal cues from teachers were seen as conveying meaning about appropriate masculinities. They watched what teachers did and listened to what they said. They reflected on teachers' example, praising some and criticising others. Women teachers were regarded as an important influence on the boys' understandings of masculinity. Women teachers who listened to teenage boys were viewed as making a positive contribution to the developing identities of the adolescent males in the study. Interviewees considered both men and women teachers as influential. The teenage boys were conscious that teachers influence their understanding of masculinity because of their extensive contact with boys during their formative adolescent years. Involvement in extra curricular activities, sport, debating, musicals and smaller class sizes enhanced the opportunities for teachers to have a positive influence on teenage boys' sense of masculinity.



## **Influential teachers: role models and exemplars**

While teachers in general were seen as having an influence on the teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity, some teachers were regarded as being more influential. The participants recalled the positive contribution of particular teachers - both men and women - to their sense of masculinity, singling them as good 'role models'. Their capacity to listen and show respect and positive regard were important; they showed an ability to 'connect' with the teenage boys in diverse circumstances: including classroom, playground and retreats.

A key finding of the study was the identification of one teacher as a particularly influential role model to a number of interviewees at that school. This male teacher acted as an exemplar of masculinity. He was widely respected because of the way he related to the boys both individually and in large groups. He challenged sexist attitudes and irresponsible behaviour, demonstrating very effective communication skills. His ability to listen and enhance the dignity of students were evident in various situations including disciplinary interviews and English lessons. He was the most admired of the teachers named by the participants from his school. He embodied an assertive and sensitive masculinity that was attractive to the boys who honoured him as a positive influence on their understanding of masculinity.

## **Contribution of school experiences**

School experiences influenced the participants' perceptions of masculinity. They recognised messages about masculinity that were implicit within school programs and procedures. They made perceptive observations about the profile given to students who experienced success in school sponsored activities. Some were critical when the school promoted a narrow understanding of masculinity based on success in one activity, such as football. A common perception of participants was that school encouraged two masculinity pathways, 'sporting' and 'academic'. They were attentive to understandings of masculinity in the curriculum, experiencing conflicting views on how to deal with emotions in different subjects. They noted that emotions were appropriately expressed when writing poetry in English, but emotions were to be restrained if one was injured in PDHPE. School provided opportunities for some teenage boys, supported by their peers, to demonstrate 'resistant' masculinities. School leaders and teachers planned retreat activities that enabled teenage

boys' to experience trust and a spirituality of connected masculinity. Connell's (1996) description of "vortices of masculinity" provided a way of considering the roles of discipline, sport and subjects. This study showed that other aspects of school experiences, including teacher relationships and spirituality, had a similar function. This showed the potential for the concept of "vortices of masculinity" for interpreting the influence of school processes on the development of a sense of masculinity.

### **Different status masculinities**

The participants reported that school accords different status to masculinities. How the school represented itself at assemblies, liturgies and celebrations influenced teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. The view of Connell (1996) that masculinities are multiple, hierarchical, hegemonic, collective, active, layered and dynamic was an implied feature of both the participants' responses and other research recorded in the literature. Schools can reproduce community definitions of hegemony and masculine success or they can promote a reflective culture that considers how the school represents masculinity. Hierarchies of masculinities operate in schools and can result in students being marginalised.

### **Sport influential**

Sport was a very influential school experience on the teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. Sport seemed to play an important role regardless of the level of sporting participation. Both the qualitative data and the literature review components of this study concurred with Connell's view (1996) that sport acts as a vortex of masculinity. Traditional "men's games" like rugby league tended to reinforce hegemonic understandings of masculinity for those who did or did not participate in sport. Sport can have a transformative effect on teenage boys in which they learn about friendship, success, failure and fitness. There is scope for schools to broaden the range of sport offered in order for more students to gain the benefits of participation.

### **7.2.4 Objective 4: interpret the research findings and identify implications for the education of teenage boys**

The results of this study support the following interpretation of how schools might take a proactive role in promoting a 'reflective' masculinity.

## **Understandings of masculinity operating within school: educational implications**

There are advantages for schools to review gender equity and the understandings of masculinity operating within their educational setting. This needs to occur in a way that is more sophisticated than the ‘boys verses girls’ analysis promoted in the popular press. For example, many Catholic schools and systems have school review processes that provide structures for reflection and planning. Co-educational and single sex primary and secondary schools would benefit from reviewing gender equity and understandings of masculinity.

Table 7.1 suggests aspects that could be addressed within school review processes.

Table 7.1 Aspects of schooling for consideration when reviewing masculinity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Assemblies: presentation of sporting, academic, cultural, spiritual dimensions</li><li>• Publications: school magazines, newsletters, website</li><li>• Curriculum: diversity of subject choices available, patterns of enrolment, masculinity and gender equity perspectives across the curriculum</li><li>• Discipline: emphasis on respect and responsibility not intimidation</li><li>• Sport: balanced approach enabling participation, competitive sport one of many aspects of school life valued including music, debating and drama</li><li>• Personal and professional development of teachers: provision of counselling and supervision for teachers, inservice opportunities regarding boys and education.</li><li>• Peer group cultures: playground behaviour, anti bullying strategies</li><li>• Gender and equity practices: human resources</li><li>• Attitudes: student attitudes towards relief teachers, social minorities, women and non hegemonic men</li><li>• Co-curricular: opportunities for students to experience participation in wide range of activities including: music, drama, social action, community involvement, peer tutoring</li></ul>

## **Promotion of a diversity of masculinities in schools**

Schools need to promote a diversity of masculinities. A useful perspective on the place of work is pertinent here, for example that of Handy (1995, 2001). In interpreting changing patterns of employment in contemporary Western societies, he proposed the benefits of people having a “work portfolio” a combination of paid work [wage work, fee work] and free work [homework, giftwork and study work]. He used this collective of work related activity to address problems in interpreting and integrating work in an situation characterised by corporate downsizing, contracting, casualisation, increased life expectancy and early retirement. Similarly, this concept could be usefully applied to schooling and masculinities. Schools could promote the development of a “masculinities portfolio” where adolescent

males are encouraged to express multiple dimensions of masculinity as parts of one coherent whole. This could enhance the esteem accorded to abilities that would otherwise be marginalised. Table 7.2 lists some strategies that can be used.

Table 7.2 Examples of possible strategies for schools to promote acceptance of diversity in masculinities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inservice opportunities be provided for sporting coaches, PDHPE teachers and other interested teachers to enhance their skills in mentoring teenage boys</li> <li>• Teacher commitment to creating environments where teenage boys feel it is safe to try and fail without fear of shame from staff and peers (writing, sport, public speaking).</li> <li>• Catholic boys' schools and their affiliated sporting associations (MCC, MCS, CAS, GPS etc) examine the introduction of inter school competitions in dance, gymnastics and circus skills.</li> <li>• Principals, school executives and teachers consciously and systematically promote student achievement in activities that might be marginalised and viewed as 'unmanly'.</li> </ul>

Salisbury and Jackson (1996) claimed that teenage boys have to deal with competing fluid masculine identities. If schools were able to create cultures where teenage boys are encouraged to accept and express non-hegemonic masculinities then their negotiation of this developmental task could be facilitated. This could result in more boys experiencing increased capacities for creative expression, literary arts, participation in sport and spiritual growth.

### **Link between masculinity and learning**

This study and the research literature suggests that teenage boys are more willing to engage in learning when it accords with their masculine self understanding. There has been significant community interest in the academic performance of teenage boys. One reason for the disengagement of some teenage boys from progress at school is that academic success may be a perceived threat to their sense of masculinity (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). Schools need to be conscious that student perceptions of masculinity can both hinder and facilitate learning. Schools cannot assume that boys perceive a positive link between pursuing school success and enhancing their masculinity.

## **Ensure that success is possible in both sport and academic pursuits**

It is a matter of some concern that participants' perceived a relatively strong division between masculinities based on either sporting or academic success. Such a division acts as a barrier to the full participation of boys in the diversity of educational pursuits offered by school. Teachers and school leaders need to be mindful that, due to the prominence of hegemonic masculinity, peer leaders in high status competitive sport have an influential role in determining the acceptability of student participation in many endeavours beyond sport. The captain and leaders of the first grade football team have a significant influence on determining acceptable masculinities within the culture of the school. Schools need to find ways to promote a sense of esteem for diverse expressions of masculinity to break down the 'sport' verses 'academic' division in perceived masculinity. Peer leaders in sport and academia can be used to broaden valued understandings of masculinity operating within the school. For example, school assemblies, magazines, newsletters, websites, year assemblies can be used to profile the major artworks of successful football playing students. Teenage boys need to know about the poetry writing and music composition abilities of leading student cricketers and basketballers. The annual involvement of the First Grade Rugby League team in the school public speaking competition may lead to more debaters, artists and musicians attending the football or participating in sport. This may result in more schools where teenage boys experience a greater willingness to participate in diverse activities unencumbered by perceptions of dual masculinities that partition involvement based on either sport or academia.

## **Personal and professional development of teachers and school leaders**

Schools need to invest in the personal and professional development of teachers and leaders if they are to respond adequately to the masculinity needs of teenage boys. This support may include inservice training, mentoring, action research projects and other opportunities for reflection on professional practice. Teachers who are able to listen to and encourage teenage boys can promote positive understandings of masculinity within their students. Principals, school leaders and administrators need assistance so they can deepen their understanding of the implications in school experiences for student masculinities. Senge et al (2000) argued that schools need to think of themselves as learning organisations. Insights from research on masculinities and schools can be applied more readily in schools that

conceive themselves as learning organisations. It can be argued that if schools neglect reflection on their culture then they are more likely to replicate uncritically hegemonic understandings of masculinity. Teachers may be unintentionally promoting a single, relatively exclusive view of masculinity. University pre-service teacher education courses need to address how teachers influence teenage boys' understandings of masculinity.

### **Curriculum implications of masculinities research**

There are multiple implications for school curriculum from masculinities research. Table 7.3 summaries some suggestions.

Table 7.3 Some curriculum implications of masculinities research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated approach to masculinity across the curriculum including English, PDHPE, and Religious Education.</li> <li>• Smaller class sizes in English to assist boys in skill development in poetry and other literacies. Better opportunities in smaller classes for peer support and enhanced teacher-pupil relationships.</li> <li>• Review teaching and learning strategies to target improved skills for boys.</li> <li>• Assist boys to interrogate cultural assumptions about masculinity and gender.</li> <li>• Presentation of masculinity as a topic for investigative study by students.</li> <li>• Implement selected strategies to enhance the education of boys in response to the circumstances and needs of particular schools. (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Noble and Bradford, 2000; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002).</li> <li>• Curriculum part of a considered whole school approach to the development of 'reflective' masculinities.</li> </ul>

Schools and teachers need to plan for change in curriculum (as proposed above) in the light of the findings of masculinities research. The advantages of planning educational experiences in this way include increasing the participation of teenage boys in school and minimising the chances that they will view learning as in conflict with their understanding of masculinity.

### **Emotional expression, masculinity and wellbeing**

Schools need to take steps to secure the health and wellbeing of teenage boys by ensuring that the expression of a range of emotions is regarded as appropriate masculine behaviour. Both the literature and qualitative components of this study have found that teenage boys are expected to be 'tough'. Teenage boys welcome opportunities to express emotions beyond

strength and anger. There are negative consequences for the education and health of teenage boys when they are pressured to conform to a narrow expression of masculinity. PDHPE teachers are particularly well placed to extend the range of teenage boys' perceptions of socially acceptable masculinity.

### **Valuing teacher student relationships**

Effective teacher student relationships are important and influential components of the education of teenage boys. Boys need to know and to be known by their teachers. They are sensitive to teacher behaviour and teacher talk. They respond positively to interest and encouragement from teachers. Teachers are to be supported in their role of being present to young people. Teachers can promote "hope centred" student masculinities (Lee, 2001). The increased professional demands of contemporary education jeopardises opportunities for teachers to relate to boys in this way. This may be a reason why some teenage boys 'disengage' from schooling. Participants reported that smaller class sizes enable improved teacher relationships and facilitate learning.

### **Catholic boys' schools and the promotion of spirituality**

Catholic boys' schools have a unique opportunity to promote spirituality in accordance with the teenage boys' aspirations for masculinities based on authenticity and connection. Catholic schools have experience and expertise in the spiritual formation of young people. Whilst this can occur in other school settings, including Catholic co-educational secondary schools, Catholic boys' schools are particularly well placed to draw on the current insights from research on boys, spirituality and education. Teenage boys are open to participation in diverse educational experiences designed to enhance spirituality including the use of contemplative prayer, rock and classical music. Respected teachers and senior student leaders can introduce cultural change that connects spirituality with the life experience of teenage boys. Catholic boys' schools are encouraged to implement programs that address teenage boys' desires for a 'spirituality of connected masculinity'.

## **Importance of employing teachers who are good role models for teenage boys**

Men and women teachers have an important contribution to make to the development of teenage boys and their understanding of masculinity. There is currently a shortage of teachers that will become more acute due to the demographic profile of the profession. While some participants in this study nominated women as teacher role models, the majority identified men. It is clear from the research that respected male teachers have a unique contribution to make in the development of teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity. Principals and other school authorities need to be able to choose men and women teachers who are good role models and who are conscious of the educational potential of this role, when employing professionals to educate students. Steps need to be taken to secure the ongoing supply of competent and qualified teachers who can respectfully engage teenage boys in education.

## **7.3 Strengths of the study and contributions to research**

### **Verbatim reporting of teenage boys' perceptions**

The qualitative component of this study reported verbatim the perceptions of teenage boys. This study set out to increase understanding based on the perceptions of teenage boys. The extensive use of the words of participants to explicate themes has assisted in clarifying how they conceive and express their views on masculinity.

### **Provides data from Australian teenage boys**

As noted by Connell (1996) research on teenage boys, masculinity and schooling has occurred internationally over the past two decades. The literature review component of this study has examined the contribution of studies from different countries including Canada (Laberge & Albert, 1999), United Kingdom (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Phoenix & Frosh, 2001) and Australia (West, 1999; Martino, 1998). Australian research has made a prominent contribution within this field. This study provides data and analysis from Australian teenage boys on aspects of schooling including Connell's (1996) vortices of masculinity. This small Australian study is one of many investigations of masculinities in local settings



that are increasing the understanding of the relationship between schooling, masculinities and the identity of teenage boys.

### **Analysed aspects of the culture of Catholic boys' schools**

This study has analysed aspects of the culture of two Catholic boys' schools. It noted similarities with the study of a Christian Brothers' College by Angus (1993) including the encouragement of the students to take on masculinities based on responsibility and maturity. Initiatives undertaken to enhance gender equity and broader expressions of masculinity in Catholic boys' schools will be facilitated by findings of this research study. Perceptions of school culture expressed by teenage boys provide detailed information on how they view masculinity, teachers, sport, discipline and experiences to promote spirituality.

### **Identifies implications from research for professional practice**

Section 7.2.4 analysed implications for professional practice drawn from both components of this study. These showed how schools could enhance a diversity of masculinities and promote the development of teenage boys. This is in accordance with both the purpose of the study and the aim of the professional doctorate program.

### **Contributes to understanding of masculinities and schooling**

This study adds to the body of academic research on the relationship between teenage boys, schooling and masculinities. It is one of many international responses to the need for knowledge of how teenage boys perceive masculinity.

## **7.4 Recommendations for further research**

### **Masculinity and student achievement**

There are indications from this study that teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity may contribute to their academic performance at school. It is a cause for concern if success at school is perceived as a threat to some teenage boys' sense of masculinity. However, the perception by students of a division between sporting and academic based masculinities may

influence teenage boys' interest in attaining improved school results and the attainment of curriculum outcomes. There is a need for research to increase understanding of teenage boys' perceptions of relationships between masculinity and school achievement.

### **Spirituality of Connected Masculinity**

This study has proposed that teenage boys value a "spirituality of connected masculinity". Teenage boys draw meaning from experiences where they are able to share a sense of unity with others including their peers. Singing at liturgies, cheering at sporting matches, participating in school retreats can provide opportunities for peer acceptance and solidarity that has a spiritual dimension. Further research can help to increase understanding of this concept and evaluate its application to other settings.

### **Promotion of gender equity and inclusive understandings of masculinity**

There is scope for research on how schools can promote gender equity and inclusive understandings of masculinity. Action research and ethnographic methodologies are examples of approaches that can be used to enhance knowledge of how schools can have a positive influence on their gender regime. Connell (1996), Lingard & Douglas (1999), Angus (1994) have shown that schools can reinforce hegemonic understandings of masculinity. There is need for research on schools that are engaged in programs to enhance student masculinities within a gender equity framework. This may provide insights into how the current interest in the education of boys can lead to action for the benefit of all students.

### **Teachers' perceptions of their influence on teenage boys' understanding of masculinity**

The participants in this study have provided valuable insights on their perceptions of the influence of teachers on their understanding of masculinity. This needs to be complemented by interviews conducted with teachers on their perceptions of teenage boys, masculinity and schooling. Participants in the current study identified teachers as role models (see Section 5.4). There are as yet no substantial studies of how teachers perceive such a role in facilitating the identity development of boys and how this relates to schooling. Research

interviews with teachers identified as role models and exemplars would help enhance the positive contribution of teachers to teenage boys' understanding of masculinity.

### **Extending research on teenage boys perceptions of masculinity and schooling**

There is need for more research on teenage boys perceptions of masculinity and schooling. This study has highlighted the valuable contribution to research made by analysing the views of teenage boys. Table 7.4 lists proposed areas for further research on the perceptions of teenage boys.

Table 7.4 Proposed areas for extending research on teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity and schooling.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of women teachers to teenage boys' perceptions of masculinity.</li> <li>• Perceptions of media images of men, teenage boys' body image and masculinity</li> <li>• Attitudes towards learning, literacy, academic achievement as they relate to masculinity.</li> <li>• Teenage boys' perceptions of attitudes needed by men in contemporary society.</li> <li>• Perceptions of 'choice' and the masculinities of teenage boys</li> <li>• Emotional expression, mental health, schooling and masculinity</li> <li>• Attitudes towards sexuality, homophobia and the response of schools</li> <li>• Teenage boys' perceptions of 'fluid' masculine identities within themselves (see Salisbury and Jackson, 1996)</li> <li>• Teacher exhortations and conversations, their perceived effectiveness</li> <li>• Role models, exemplars of masculinity, recommendations for professional practice</li> </ul>

This study has demonstrated that teenage boys are conscious of the influence of school on their understanding of masculinity. Participants in this study have shown some level of evaluative thinking on the contribution of teachers and schooling to their development of masculine identities. Teenage boys can articulate their perceptions of masculinity and their views provide valuable insights to inform action by teachers and school leaders.

## **Appendix 1**

Copy of University Research Projects Ethics Committee  
Ethics Clearance for a Research Project – Approval From

Research Ethics Committee Register Number: N98 - 29

## Appendix 2

### INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

#### *TEENAGE BOYS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL PROCESSES ON THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF MASCULINITY.*

NAME OF RESEARCHER: MR JOHN LEE

The purpose of this study is to gain a greater insight into teenage boys' understanding of what it means to be a man. This study is investigating the influence of teachers and school life on boys' ideas about masculinity. Students will be invited to participate in either an individual interview or a focus group discussion with a few other boys.

A student agreeing to participate in this study will be giving up approximately 45 minutes of his time. A time will be negotiated to minimise inconvenience to participants.

There is widespread discussion in our society about how boys are managing in our rapidly changing world. Many boys appear to be having difficulty in all levels of schooling. Teachers and schools maybe an important source of support for boys discovering what it means to be a man today. This study aims to give teenage boys an opportunity to give their views on masculinity and the role of school.

The participant is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason. It is important to emphasize that any withdrawal from the research will not prejudice the participant's future care or academic progress.

If you agree that your child can participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Informed Consent form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Researcher.

Any questions regarding this project can be directed to the Researcher, Mr John Lee on telephone number (02) 4629 4116. Questions can also be directed to the Supervisor, Associate Professor Graham Rossiter on telephone number (02) 9739 2239 or by mail at Department of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University, 179 Albert Road, Strathfield NSW 2135.

This study has been approved by the University Research Projects Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint about the way you have been treated during the study, or a query that the Researcher or Supervisor has not been able to satisfy, you may write care of the nearest branch of the office of research: Office of Research, 179 Albert Road, Strathfield NSW 2135.

## Appendix 3

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

*TEENAGE BOYS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL PROCESSES ON THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF MASCULINITY.*

NAME OF RESEARCHER: MR JOHN LEE

I..... (the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Information Letter to Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I can withdraw at any time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:.....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE.....  
DATE.....

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN:.....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE.....  
DATE.....

NAME OF RESEARCHER:..MR JOHN LEE.....

SIGNATURE.....  
DATE.....

## **Appendix 4**

### **Interview Questions**

Sample or indicative questions to be asked in semi structured interviews and focus groups  
**March 1999**

Interview/ Group Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Letters signed and checked. One returned to student, one to researcher. Parent employment and place of birth information noted.

Microphone and tape recorder check.

Thank you (Name) for agreeing to be part of this study on the attitudes of teenage boys towards what it means to be a man. Let me remind you that your name and identity will not be written in any report that comes from this interview. Information will be collected from a large number of students in different schools. Your honest answers will be able to assist in communicating the views of young men on masculinity. It is up to you as to how you answer the questions. If the story of an event comes to mind, then perhaps you might care to share something of the memory.

#### **Indicative questions on masculinity and teachers**

There are three sets of questions I'd like you to answer. The first set of questions asks you to think about your experiences of your teachers here or at other schools that you have attended. You might care to answer the questions by re telling a story of an event.

1. Can you tell the story of an experience or an event where a teacher said or did something that made you think about what it means to be a man? If yes, please describe what happened.
2. Have your teachers influenced your understanding of masculinity? Please explain.

3. Do the teachers' messages about masculinity come across to you? Please explain.
  
4. Do the teachers' views on masculinity come across to you via subtle or explicit ways? (i.e. direct or indirect ways) Please explain.
  
5. Have your teachers said or done anything which gives the impression that one form of masculinity is best? If yes, describe what was said or done.

Indicative questions on masculinity and school

The second set of questions asks you to think about your experiences at this school. However, you can speak about your experiences at other schools if they come to mind.

6. Has this school influenced your understanding of masculinity? If yes, how has it influenced you?
  
7. Does this school promote one particular understanding of masculinity? Or does it promote a number of understandings of masculinity? If yes describe them.
  
8. Does the culture or spirit of this school influence your understanding of masculinity? Please explain.
  
9. Please explain whether any of these features of school life have influenced your understanding of masculinity?
 

sport	discipline and pastoral care
school subjects	religious events like Masses and retreats



10. Are you satisfied with the ways that masculinity is portrayed in your school? Why? Why not? Are any changes necessary in your school?

11. If you had a son, would you send him to this school? Why? Why not?

Indicative questions on masculinity

The third set of questions asks your views on masculinity and being a man today. A short response is fine for each of these questions.

12. What does it mean to be a man today?

13. What do you understand masculinity to mean?

14. Are there different types of masculinity? If yes, describe them.

15. What has influenced your understanding of masculinity? Please try to identify them.

16. Is there any adult in the school who is a good role model for you?

17. One last question.... As we come to the end of the interview, has any other thought, comment or story come to mind about teachers, school and masculinity?

Individual or group..... questions.....

## Bibliography

Angus, L. (1993). Women in a male domain: Gender and organisational culture in a Christian Brothers College. In L. Angus (Ed.). Education, Inequality and Social Identity. Washington: Falmer.

Askew, S. and Ross, C. (1988). Boys Don't Cry: boys and sexism in education. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Avery, C. (1990). Learning to Research, Researching to Learn. In M.S. Olson (Ed) (1990) Opening the Door to Classroom Research. Delaware: IRA.

Bagnall, D. (2001). "Lost Boys". *The Bulletin*. 5 June.

Bailey, C.A. (1996a). A Guide to Field Research. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Bailey, L. (1996b). The Feminisation of a School? Women Teachers in a Boys' School. Gender and Education. 8. (2), 171-184.

Bem, S. L. (1987). Gender schema theory: a conceptual and empirical integration. In P. Shaver, C. Hendrick (Ed.). Sex and Gender. Newbury Park: Sage.

Beynon J. (1989). 'A School for Men': An Ethnographic Case Study of Routine Violence in Schooling. In S. Walker and L. Barton (Eds) Politics and the Processes of Schooling. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Biddulph, S. (1998). Raising Boys. Sydney: Finch Publishing

Bjerrum Nielson, H. & Rudberg, M. (1994). Psychological gender and modernity. Oslo/Oxford: Scandinavian University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brod, H., Kaufman, M., (Ed.). (1994). Theorizing Masculinities. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Browne, R. (1995) Working with boys and masculinity. In R. Browne, R. Fletcher (Ed.). (1995). Boys in Schools: Addressing the real issues- behaviour, values and relationships. Sydney: Finch Publishing.

Browne, R., & Fletcher, R. (Ed.). (1995). Boys in Schools: Addressing the real issues-behaviour, values and relationships. Sydney: Finch Publishing.

Canaan, J. E. (1996). Drinking, fighting and working-class masculinities. In M. Mac an Ghail, (Ed.). (1996). Understanding Masculinities. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Carr-Gregg, M. and Shale, E. (2002). Adolescence: a guide for parents. Sydney: Finch Publishing.

Carrigan, T., Connell, R., and Lee, J. (1987). Hard and Heavy: Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity. In M. Kaufman, (Ed.). (1987). Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by men on pleasure, power and change. (pp.139-192). Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Christian, H. (1994). The Making of Anti-Sexist Men. London: Routledge.

Chowdorow, N. (1989). Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Connell, R.W. (1989) Cool guys, swots and wimps: the interplay of masculinity and education. Oxford Review of Education. 15. (3), 291-303.

Connell, R.W. (1995). Masculinities. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R.W. (2000). The Men and the Boys. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R.W. (1996). Teaching the Boys: New Research on Masculinity, and Gender Strategies for Schools. Teachers College Record. 98. (2), 206-235.

Connell, R.W. (1993) The big picture: masculinities in recent world history. Theory and Society. 22., 597-624

Cornwall, A. & Lindisfarne, N. (Eds.). (1995). Dislocating masculinity. London: Routledge.

Courtice, R.A.(1994). Whole School Processes and the Construction of Masculine Sexualities in an All-Male Secondary School. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Queensland, Brisbane.

Craig, S. (Ed.). (1992). Men, Masculinity and the Media. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Crawford, M.L. & Rossiter, G.M. (1996). The Secular Spirituality of Youth: Implications for Religious Education. British Journal of Religious Education. 18. (3), 133-143.

David, D. & Brannon, R. (Eds.). (1976). The Forty-nine Percent Majority: The male sex role. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

De Garis, L. (2000). "Be a Buddy to Your Buddy": Male Identity, Aggression, and Intimacy in a Boxing Gym. In J. McKay, M.A. Messner, & D. Sabo, (Eds.). Masculinities, Gender Relations, and Sport. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denborough, D. (1996). Step by step: developing respectful and effective ways of working with young men to reduce violence. In C. McLean, M. Carey, and C. White (Eds.) Men's Ways of Being. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Ed.). (1994). Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Delamont, S. (1992). Fieldwork in Educational Settings: Methods, Pitfalls and Perspectives. London: Falmer Press Taylor & Francis Group
- Donaldson, M. (1993). What is hegemonic masculinity? Theory and Society. 22, 643-657.
- Dutton, K.R. (1995). The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Physical Development. London: Cassell.
- Edley, N. & Wetherell, M. (1996). Masculinity, Power and Identity. In M. Mac an Ghaill, (Ed.). (1996). Understanding Masculinities. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Edley, N. & Wetherell, M. (1995). Men in Perspective: Practice, Power and Identity. Prentice Hall Harvester Wheatsheaf: London.
- Engebretson, K. (2002). Expressions of Religiosity and Spirituality among Australian 14 Year Olds. International Journal of Children's Spirituality. 7. (1), 57-72.
- Eisenhart, M. & Howe, K. (1992). Validity in Educational Research. In M.D. LeCompte, W.L. Millroy & J.Preissle, (Ed.). (1992). The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Fitzclarence, L. & Hickey, C. (2000). Learning to Rationalise Abusive Behaviour Through Football. In C. Hickey, L. Fitzclarence, R. Matthews, (Ed.). Where the boys are: Masculinity, sport and education. Geelong: Deakin University Press.
- Fitzclarence, L., Hickey, C. & Matthews, R. (1997). Getting changed for football: challenging communities of practice. In J. Kenway (Ed.). Will boys be boys? Boys' education in the context of gender reform. Deakin West: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
- Fontana, A. & Frey, J.H. (1994) Interviewing: The Art of Science. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, (Ed.). (1994). Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Francis, B. (2000). Boys, Girls and Achievement: Addressing the classroom issues. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Gard, M. (2001). 'I like smashing people, and I like getting smashed myself': addressing issues of masculinity in physical education and sport. In W. Martino and B. Meyenn (Ed.). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.
- Gilbert, R. & Gilbert, P. (1998). Masculinity goes to School. St Leonards: Allen and Unwin.
- Goldberg, S. (1973). Inevitability of Patriarchy. New York: William Morrow

- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the Prison Notebooks. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Grodin, D. & Lindlof, T.R. (Eds.). (1996). Constructing the Self in a Mediated World. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Grogan, S. & Richards, H. (2002). Body Image: Focus Groups with Boys and Men. Men and Masculinities. 4. (3), 219-232.
- Green, M.C. (1998). The charismatic culture of Marist secondary schools in the Province of Sydney. Doctoral Thesis. Faculty of Education. University of Sydney.
- Gurian, M. (1999). A Fine Young Man: What parents, mentors and educators can do to shape adolescent boys into exceptional men. New York: Tarcher Putnam
- Hall, S. & Jefferson, T. (1976). Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain. London: Hutchinson.
- Handy, C. (1995). The Age of Unreason. London: Arrow Business Books.
- Handy, C. (2001). The Elephant and The Flea: Looking Backwards to the Future. London: Hutchinson.
- Hartman, D. (1999). I Can Hardly Wait Till Monday: Women teachers talk about what works for them and for boys. Callaghan: University of Newcastle
- Hawkes, T. (2001). Boy Oh Boy: How to raise and educate boys. Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education Australia
- Hay, D. & Nye, R. (1998). The Spirit of the Child. London: HarperCollins.
- Hearn, J., & Collinson, D.L. (1994). Theorizing Unities and Differences Between Men and Between Masculinities. In H. Brod, M. Kaufman, (Ed.). Theorizing Masculinities. (pp.97-118). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hearn, J. (1996). Is masculinity dead? A critique of the concept of masculinity / masculinities. In M. Mac an Ghail (Ed.). Understanding Masculinities. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Heward, C. (1988). Making a man of him: Parents and their sons' education at an English public school 1929-50. London: Routledge.
- Hickey, C., Fitzclarence, L., Matthews, R. (Ed.). (2000). Where the boys are: Masculinity, sport and education. Geelong: Deakin University Press.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training. (2002). Boys: Getting it right. Report on the inquiry into the education of boys. Canberra: The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Hutt, C. (1972). Males and Females. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Humberstone, B. (1990). Warriors or Wimps: Creating Alternative Forms of Physical Education. In M.A. Messner, and D.F. Sabo, (Ed.). Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives. Illinois: Human Kinetics Books.

Jackson, C. (2002). 'Laddishness' as a Self-worth Protection Strategy. Gender and Education. 14. (1), 37-51.

James, P. (1999). Masculinities under Reconstruction: classroom pedagogy and cultural change. Gender and Education. 11. (4), 395-412.

Janesick, V.J. (1994). The Dance of Qualitative Research Design. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, (Ed.). (1994). Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Josselson, R. & Lieblich, A. (Eds.). (1995). Interpreting Experience: The Narrative Study of Lives, Volume 3. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Katz, J. (1995). Reconstructing masculinity in the locker room: The mentors in violence prevention project. Harvard Educational Review. 65. (2), 163-174.

Kay, G.E. (1994). Masculinity in a Corporate Boys' School. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Canberra, Canberra.

Kenway, J. (Ed.). (1997). Will boys be boys? Boys' education in the context of gender reform. Deakin West: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

Kerfoot, D. & Whitehead, S. (1998). "Boys own" stuff: Masculinity and the management of further education. Sociological Review. 46, 436-457.

Kindlon, D. & Thompson, M. (1999). Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys. London: Michael Joseph.

Kimmel, M.S. (Ed.). (1987). Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity. Newbury Park: Sage.

King, M. (1997). Starting Research in Education. Campbelltown: University of Western Sydney Macarthur.

Kvale, S. (1996). InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Laberge, S. & Albert, M. (1999). Conceptions of Masculinity and of Gender Transgressions in Sport among Adolescent Boys: Hegemony, Contestation and Social Class Dynamic. Men and Masculinities. 1. (3), 243-267.

Lee, J.R. (2001). Teachers and the promotion of “hope centred” student masculinities. Paper presented at Educating Boys in the Middle Years Symposium, St Ignatius College, Riverview.

LeCompte, M.D. and Preissle, J. (Ed.). (1993). Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. Second Edition. San Diego: Academic Press.

Lesko, N. (Ed.). (2000). Masculinities at School. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lingard, B. and Douglas, P. (1999). Men Engaging Feminisms: Pro-feminism, backlashes and schooling. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Light, R. & Fawns, R. (2001) The thinking body: Constructivist approaches to games teaching in Physical Education. Melbourne Studies in Education. 42. (2), 69-87.

Light, R. and Kirk, D. (2000). High School Rugby, the Body and the Reproduction of Masculinity. Sport, Education and Society. 5. (2), 163-176.

Loane, S. (1995). “The trouble with boys”. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August.

Ludowyke, J. (1997). Improving the School Performance of Boys. North Melbourne: Victoria Association of State Secondary School Principals.

Lytle, S. and Cochran-Smith, M. (1992). Teacher Research as a way of Knowing. Harvard Educational Review. 62. (4), 447-474.

Mac an Ghail, M. (Ed.). (1996). Understanding Masculinities. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Mac an Ghail, M. (1994). The making of men: masculinities, sexualities and schooling. Buckingham: Open University Press.

MacInnes, J. (1998). The End of Masculinity. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Mahoney, P. (1985). Schools for Boys? Co-education Reassessed. London: Hutchinson.

Majors, R. & Billson, J. (1992). Cool pose: The dilemmas of black manhood in America. New York: Lexington.

Mangan, J.A (1987). Social Darwinism and upper class education in late Victorian and Edwardian England. In J.A. Mangan & J. Walvin, (Eds.). (1987). Manliness and morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940. New York: St Martin's Press.

Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (Eds.). (1987). Manliness and morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940. New York: St Martin's Press.

Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994). Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide. The Falmer Press: London.

Martino, W. (1998). Interrogating Masculinities: Regimes of Practice. Doctoral thesis, School of Education, Murdoch University.

Martino, W. (2001). "Powerful people aren't usually real kind, friendly, open people!": Boys Interrogating Masculinities at School. In W. Martino and B. Meyenn (Ed.). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Martino, W. and Meyenn, B. (Ed.). (2001). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press

Martino, W. and Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (2001). Boys' Stuff: boys talking about what matters. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.

Maxwell, J.A. (1992). Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research. Harvard Educational Review. 62. (3), 279-300.

McKay, J., Messner, M.A & Sabo, D. (Ed.). (2000). Masculinities, Gender Relations, and Sport. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Messner, M.A. (1992). Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity. Boston: Beacon Press.

Messner, M.A. and Sabo, D.F. (Ed.). (1990). Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives. Illinois: Human Kinetics Books.

Meyenn, B. and Parker, J. (2001). Naughty boys at school: perspectives on boys and discipline. In W. Martino and B. Meyenn (Ed.). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Miedzain, M. (1992). Boys will be boys. London: Virago.



- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mills, M. (2000). Issues in Implementing Boys' Programme in Schools: male teachers and empowerment. Gender and Education. 12. (2), 221-238.
- Mills, M. (2001). Pushing it to the max: interrogating the risky business of being a boy. In W. Martino and B. Meyenn (Ed.). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Moloney, J. (2000). Boys and books: building a culture of reading around our boys. Sydney: ABC Books.
- Monte, C.F. (1995). Beneath the Mask: An Introduction to Theories of Personality. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Morgan, D.L. (1997). Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Murray, L. & Lawrence, B. (2000). Practitioner Based Enquiry, Principles for Postgraduate Research. London: Falmer.
- Nayak, A. and Kehily, M.J. (2001). 'Learning to laugh': A study of schoolboy humour in the English secondary school. In W. Martino and B. Meyenn (Ed.). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Noble, C. & Bradford, W. (2000). Getting it right for boys and girls. London: Routledge
- O'Doherty, S. (1994). Challenges and Opportunities: A Discussion Paper. A Report to the Minister for Education, Training, and Youth Affairs on the Inquiry into Boys' Education. NSW Government Advisory Committee on Education, Training and Tourism, Sydney.
- Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (1997). We want to address boys' education but... In J. Kenway (Ed.). Will boys be boys? Boys' education in the context of gender reform. Deakin West: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation Methods. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Parker, A. (1996). The Construction of Masculinity within Boys' Physical Education. Gender and Education. 8. (2), 147-157.
- Pease, B. (2002). Men and Gender Relations. Croydon Victoria: Tertiary Press.
- Pheonix, A. & Frosh, S. (2001). Positioned by "Hegemonic" Masculinities: A Study of London Boys' Narratives of Identity. Australian Psychologist. 36. (1), 27-35.

Pleck, J.H. (1987). American fathering in historical perspective. In M.S. Kimmel, (Ed.). (1987). Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity. Newbury Park: Sage.

Pollack, W. (2000). Real Boys' Voices. Carlton North: Scribe Publications

Pollack, W. (1998). Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood. New York: Random House.

Postman, N. (1979). Teaching as a Conserving Activity. New York: Delacorte.

Prain, V. (2000) 'Playing the Man' and Changing Masculinities. In C. Hickey, L. Fitzclarence, R. Matthews, (Ed.). Where the boys are: Masculinity, sport and education. Geelong: Deakin University Press

Prosser, A.K. (1999). Having their say: some young men's beliefs and attitudes about being a man. Master of Arts Thesis. University of Canberra.

Reichert, M.C. (2001). Rethinking masculinities: new ideas for schooling boys. In W. Martino and B. Meyenn (Ed.). What about the boys? Issues of masculinity in schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Reimer, K.M. & Bruce, B. (1994). Building Teacher-Researcher Collaboration: Dilemmas and Strategies. Educational Action Research. 2. (2), 213-214.

Rogers, B. (1998). 'You know the fair rule': and much more. Melbourne: ACER Press.

Rohr, R. (1998). Boys to Men: Rediscovering rites of passage for our time. Sojourners. May – June, 16-21.

Rose, N.S. (1996). Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Rossiter, G.M. (2000). The shaping influence of film and television on the spirituality and identity of young people: an educational response (Part 3). Journal of Religious Education. 48. (3), 2-16.

Rotundo, E.A. (1987). In J.A. Mangan & J. Walvin, (Eds.). (1987). Manliness and morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940. New York: St Martin's Press.

Rose, D. (1990). Living the Ethnographic Life. Newbury Park: Sage

Sabo, D.F. & Runfola, R. (1980) Jock: Sports and Male Identity. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Salisbury, J. and Jackson, D. (1996). Challenging Macho Values: Practical ways of working with adolescent boys. Falmer Press: London

Seidler, V.J. (1991). Recreating Sexual Politics: Men, feminism and politics. London: Routledge

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., and Kleiner, A. (2000). Schools That Learn. London: Nicholas Breakey Publishing.

Slade, M. & Trent, F. (2000). What the boys are saying: An examination of the views of boys about declining rates of achievement and retention. International Education Journal. 1. (3), 201-229.

Springhall, J. (1987). Building character in the British boy: the attempt to extend Christian manliness to working class adolescents 1880-1914. In J.A. Mangan & J. Walvin, (Eds.). (1987). Manliness and morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940. New York: St Martin's Press.

Stewart, D.W. & Shamdasani, P.N. (1990). Focus Groups: Theory and Practice. Newbury Park: Sage.

Stoltenberg, J. (1990). Refusing to be a Man. New York: Meridan

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques. Newbury Park: Sage.

Teese, R., Davies, M., Charlton, M., & Polesel, J. (1995). Who wins at school? Boys and Girls in Australian Secondary Education. Melbourne: University of Melbourne Department of Education Policy and Management.

Tacey, D. (1997). Remaking men: the revolution in masculinity. Ringwood: Viking Penguin.

Tacey, D. (1999). Youth Spirituality, Religion, and Cosmic Sacredness: Post Modernity, Post-Christian and The Coming Age. Interface: A Forum for Theology in the World. 2. (2), 22-37.

*The Boys in Schools Bulletin*. The Boys in Schools Program. The Family Action Centre. The University of Newcastle.

Tolson, A. (1977). The Limits of Masculinity. London: Tavistock

Wagner, J. (1993). Educational research as a full participant: challenges and opportunities for generating new knowledge. Qualitative Studies in Education. 6. (1), 3-18.

Walby, S. (1990). Theorising Patriarchy. Oxford: Blackwell.

Walker, J.C. (1988). Louts and Legends: Male youth culture in an inner-city school. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Webber, R. (2002) Young People and their quest for meaning. Youth Studies Australia. 21.(1), 40-43.

Wetherell, M. & Edley, N. (1999). Negotiating hegemonic masculinity: Imaginary positions and psycho-discursive practices. Feminism and Psychology. 9, 335-356

West, P. (1996). Fathers, Sons and Lovers: Men talk about their lives from 1930s to today. Sydney. Sydney: Finch

West, P. (2002). What is the matter with boys? Showing boys the way towards manhood. Marrickville: Choice

West, P. (1999). Boys' underachievement in school: Some persistent problems and some current research. Issues in Educational Research. 9. (1), 33-54.

Willis, P.E. (1977). Learning to labour: How working class kids get working class jobs. Westmead: Saxon House.

Wright, J. (2000). Reconstructing Gender in Sport and Physical Education. In C. Hickey, L. Fitzclarence, & R. Matthews. Where the boys are: Masculinity, sport and education. Geelong: Deakin University Press