



“There are many causes of violence against women but there is one main cause, and that is the attitude of men towards women...”

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd  
ABC Radio

## Seminar and workshop series

# White Ribbon Day Everyday

Amanda Keddie and Martin Mills are offering opportunities for teachers, principals, policy-makers and others concerned with violence against girls and women and marginalised boys and men, to attend a lecture and/or participate in workshops that draw on research material from their recent book, *Teaching Boys: Developing Classroom Practices that Work*. These sessions demonstrate some of the ways in which teachers and schools can work with boys to address social problems associated with violence.

### White Ribbon Day Everyday: Beyond harmful constructions of masculinity

Michael Flood's report associated with the annual White Ribbon Day campaign is a disturbing snapshot of an enduring problem—violence against women. Referring to recent national surveying, he reports that: *Anywhere from one-quarter to one-third, and even up to one-half, of Australian women will experience physical or sexual violence by a man at some point in their lives...*

*In the last year, between five and ten percent of Australian women experienced at least one incident of physical and/*

*or sexual violence by a man.*

White Ribbon Day was initiated by a small group of Canadian men in 1991 in response to one man's massacre of fourteen women in Montreal a year earlier. The group began the White Ribbon Campaign to encourage men to speak out against violence against women. In 1999, the United Nations declared 25 November the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the White Ribbon has become the symbol for the day.

White Ribbon Day is highly positive and significant in raising awareness about this global problem and its devastating social, health and economic effects. However, as the resources associated with this Day attest, effective approaches to addressing violence against women—that promote healthy, equal relationships—among boys and girls require more than consciousness-raising on a single day. As social commentators, researchers and educators point out, violence against women is a complex and broad social problem associated with unequal gender and power relations and harmful constructions of masculinity. Schools play a crucial role in supporting such

awareness through gender just education. Along these lines, the Australian Federal Government's recently introduced National Plan to reduce violence against women, is investing \$9 million to support the uptake of 'Respectful Relationships' programs in schools. According to Kevin Rudd, this program is a crucial part of the broader challenge to "change the attitudes of many Australian men, especially young men". As he notes:

*There are many causes of violence against women but there is one main cause, and that is the attitude of men towards women...* (ABC radio)

The program is about prevention with the aim of teaching boys from a young age that violence is completely unacceptable.

Supporting respectful and gender-just relations is central to Amanda Keddie and Martin Mills' book, *Teaching Boys: Developing Classroom Practices that Work*. These authors contend that the complex factors that produce particular forms of harmful masculinity associated with physical strength, prowess and domination need to be acknowledged and challenged with boys. Their research examines how the celebration of dominant masculinity endorses a broad spectrum of

harmful behaviours including violence and aggression but also sexual harassment and homophobia as well as many boys' risk-taking, disruptive and disengaged classroom behaviours.

Martin's earlier book, *Challenging Violence in Schools: An issue of masculinities*, foregrounded the clear relationship between the social construction of 'successful' masculinities and violence in schools. *Teaching Boys* disrupts this relationship. It integrates the best research on boys and schooling with the best research on pedagogies to foreground teacher practice that challenges, and provides alternatives to, harmful constructions of masculinity.

Amanda and Martin do not work with negative images of boys. They have been concerned with some of the ways in which the boys' debate has constructed boys as new victims in schools. This is not to say that there are not academic issues with some boys in terms of achievement, engagement and subject selection. There are. However, they contend that rather than treating boys as victims and as deficit (for example, by suggesting that boys can only sit still for short periods of time), and blaming teachers, schools and parents for a 'boy problem', that the complex factors that produce and celebrate particular forms of harmful masculinity need to be acknowledged and challenged. Such challenges, they suggest, will be beneficial to both boys and girls, and their teachers. Their research foregrounds the work of teachers who have been successful in undertaking these challenges.

Amanda and Martin are both highly experienced presenters. Their brief biographies are below.



### Martin Mills

Martin is a Professor at the University of Queensland in the School of Education, where he is Director of Research and Graduate Studies. He is the author of seven books (one single-authored, six co-authored) and numerous articles in leading international and high impact journals. Aside from *Teaching Boys: Developing Classroom Practices that Work*, these include *Challenging Violence in Schools: An issue of masculinities* and *Boys and Schooling: Beyond structural reform*. He also has four co-authored social science textbooks for schools.

Martin has been involved with significant and high impact commissioned research projects. For instance,

he led two major investigations into the quality of pedagogy and curriculum in Queensland, the *Queensland Longitudinal Study of Teaching and Learning (2008)* and *Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework Evaluation Project (2008)*; and was a key researcher on the *Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study*, and on the federally-funded research project *Addressing the Educational Needs of Boys (2003)*. He has also conducted consultancy work for education departments in New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland, and was a critical friend to schools on the New South Wales *Priority Action Schools Project* working with disadvantaged schools and to schools involved in Queensland's *New Basics Project*.

Martin is a member of the Queensland Studies Authority's Equity Advisory Committee and on the executive of the Australian Association for Research in Education. He is an editor of the international journal, *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education* and is an International Editorial Consultant on the leading international journals *Gender and Education* and *British Educational Research Journal*.

*Teaching Boys: Developing Classroom Practices that Work* is available through the following url:

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=305&book=9781741752427>.



### Amanda Keddie

Amanda is a Research Fellow within the Griffith Institute for Educational Research, Griffith University. She is a leading scholar in the field of gender, schooling and social justice. Her more recent work focuses on issues of globalisation, gender policy and cultural diversity. Amanda has published widely in these areas in leading international journals. Her distinctive contributions have been her theorising of gendered identities and schooling and processes and her articulation of pedagogical frameworks towards gender justice.

Amanda has worked as a consultant and adviser to many schools. She has presented her work in the area of gender identity and pedagogy to teachers at various professional development workshops and conferences. This has taken the form of focused work with particular schools in terms of investigating, and presenting, professional reports in the areas of gender and schooling. In this capacity she has worked with professional organisations such as the Association

of Women Educators and the Australian Education Union. Amanda is on the editorial board of *Curriculum Perspectives*, *The Journal of Boyhood Studies* and *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*.

Maria Delaney, a long-time associate, will be working with Amanda and Martin in supporting committed organisations to address the social problems associated with violence.



### Maria Delaney

With a Diploma of Teaching, a BA in Women's Studies and Study of Religion, and current studies for a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership, Maria is preparing for Doctoral studies under Martin's supervision. Over the past ten years she has conducted research, and developed and facilitated a range of community education and professional learning and teaching programs in primary and secondary schools in relation to gender, identity and behaviour, boys' education, self-esteem and self management, and body image and eating issues—including as project officer in the Education Queensland Gender Equity Unit, project leader for a cluster implementation of the Federal Government's *Success for Boys* professional learning program, and as board member and workshop facilitator for the Eating Disorders Association of Queensland. Maria has most recently been engaged as Senior Project Officer for the *National Safe and Supportive School Communities* project (SSSC), primarily developing learning and teaching content for the highly regarded **Bullying. No way!** website ([www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)). She is also a leading member of the Association of Women Educators ([www.awe.asn.au](http://www.awe.asn.au)) and project officer for their *Leading Social Change* project, which included the development of comprehensive Gender and Education Guidelines (<http://www.awe.asn.au/project-leading-social-change/gender-justice.php>), and Links to resources (<http://www.awe.asn.au/links.php>).

This year Maria was the recipient of the Association of Women Educators 2009 Pam Gilbert Award for Gender Equity.

Please contact Maria Delaney for further information to organise dates and times for seminars and workshops: [delaneymt@gmail.com](mailto:delaneymt@gmail.com).