



Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Better life for rural boys

Dr Geoff Munns and a team of colleagues from the School of Education, including Dr Wayne Sawyer, Dr Bronwyn Cole, Dr Mary Mooney, Dr Anne Power and Dr Katina Zammitt are exploring how to improve educational and life outcomes for boys in rural areas through collaborative research with the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET).



'Rural Australian's face growing pressures from drought, dwindling public services, durable disadvantages and alarming rates of school disengagement, particularly amongst adolescent boys', says Dr Munns. 'Engaging young men in school-based activities that encourage autonomy, self-regulation and the development of a community of learners have been shown in previous research to have a positive effect on their relationships with education, schools, classrooms and teachers. This project will shift these theories into practice by conducting workshops for middle years teachers in the Riverina, New England, Illawarra and South Eastern school regions, to train them to provide motivation and engagement activities for boys at their schools.'

After training the teachers, the research team will follow the progress of boys whose teachers attended the workshops, and will also teach high school educators to evaluate the changes in boys' behaviour, life skills and degree of participation in school activities as a result of involvement in the engagement program.

The evidence collected as a result of this research will be compiled into a report and recommendations to DET to enhance future policy, planning and practice in boys' education. In the longer-term, the research could improve the life outcomes, expectations and future success of rural young men and their families.

Project Title: Engaging Middle Years Boys in Rural Educational Settings

Funding has been set at: \$49,500

December 2007

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