



7 September 2026

Cheap shots against the profession reflect poorly on political opportunists - not on teachers

At a time when teachers, school leaders and school support staff are under more pressure than ever from increasingly complex student needs, unsustainable workloads, the onslaught of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and escalating rates of gendered violence, some political figures have chosen to spread disinformation and disrespect.

Teachers in both government and non-government schools work tirelessly to provide all students with a high-quality education. This involves delivering the Australian Curriculum, or its state-developed equivalent, through evidence-based teaching practices in literacy and numeracy, while ensuring learning is grounded in established historical and scientific evidence.

Critical literacy is embedded in the [Australian curriculum](#), but some commentators, in spite of their protestations to the contrary, do not want this skill applied to their own pronouncements. When politicians such as Senator Pauline Hanson accuse schools of indoctrination, they are instead seeking to insert their own divisive and slanted views into the curriculum.

Equally ill-informed are Senator Matt Canavan's comments about the "feminisation of the curriculum" and Angus Taylor MP's apparent reluctance to support consent education.

The curriculum is gender-neutral, but any exploration of history inevitably shows the long chronicle of efforts to subjugate women and exclude them from equal participation in society. To characterise telling the truth about our shared past as the "feminisation of the curriculum" is a dog whistle to disaffected young men and perpetuates the myth of male victimhood.

In recognition of the threat posed by gendered violence, in 2025 the IEU has endorsed a [policy](#) setting out recommendations to educate, prevent and respond to harassment in schools. A recent [Monash University study](#), conducted in partnership with the AEU, also highlighted the prevalence of sexism and misogyny in Australian schools and made clear recommendations for addressing these issues. It is worth remembering that students who exhibit these behaviours will at some stage leave school to go on to participate in higher education, workplaces and the wider community. If these attitudes and behaviours are carried into adult life, and are reinforced by misinformed and irresponsible political commentary, they become a threat to us all.

Conducting consent and respectful relationships education in schools is not "anti-boy". It is a way forward to a society that values all its members and does not produce young people who speak and act in ways that disrespect women, minorities and others in our community, whether they are teachers or not.