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# CRUCIAL Times

Community Resource Unit Inc.

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first edition of *CRUCIAL Times*.

This newsletter will, hopefully, provide a means of communicating with a large number of people throughout Queensland. We expect that there will be people with disabilities, parents, family members, workers in service agencies, committee members and government workers who will find the content of our pages relevant, interesting and thought provoking.

These modest 'sheets' are written with a largely Queensland focus and distribution, although colleagues, supporters and friends in other places have requested copies.

### WHY 'CRUCIAL Times'?

We believe we do live in crucial times. No doubt, it can be said that each and every period of history is crucial in the sense that the way in which crises are dealt with, what opportunities are responded to and what decisions governments and other powerful

groups make, will impact on citizens for a long time afterwards.

At the very least 'our times', that is the period of our own lives, is absolutely important to each of us. This is our time and, as far as we know with any certainty, we will have no other. These 'sheets' will be most welcomed, I suggest, by those who want their 'being here' to make a difference.

There are some worrying factors and trends apparent today that bring into sharp focus some significant issues for people with disabilities. The elevation of economic rationalism to the status of 'philosophy', the re-emergence of the eugenics movement in the guise of genetic engineering, and the rapid increase in the amount of air time given to discussing the merits of euthanasia and assisted suicide, are all warning signs of present and future dangers that face those of us who are deemed to be of 'less worth' than others.

Many of the issues that, on the surface, may appear as solely 'disability' issues, on further exploration reveal themselves to be pertinent and highly relevant to the crucial and pressing issues of 'today' for our communities and for Australian society at large. The failure of a multi-cultural approach in Australia as a way of building an integrated and cohesive society, the spread of neo-fascism in Europe and the high level of inter-tribal and clan warfare throughout the world, indicate that the acceptance and inclusion of 'difference' remains largely an unfulfilled desire.

Thinking about the meaning of life and the value of lives, and questions such as 'What is a good life?', and 'What is a good society?', clearly have great significance for us all in the longer term. In the immediate future the survival and well-being of the most vulnerable amongst us may very well depend on our preparedness, as a society, to address these basic moral questions.

Although *CRUCIAL Times* will not be able to respond to all of these issues, they do nevertheless provide the context and backdrop against which we live and work. Community Resource Unit engages with many of these issues in other areas of its work program, and from time to time we will endeavour to share some of these with our readers.

Please be assured that serious reflection is only part of what we want to achieve through *CRUCIAL Times*. As you will see from the contents of this newsletter we will cover a range of matters, some almost trivial, many definitely light-hearted and some, hopefully, witty and clever. (Although we may have to rely on guest contributors for the latter!) Seriousness does not necessarily mean solemnity, and despair is totally discouraged. Hopefulness is preferred.



The Editors look forward to receiving your comments, feedback, criticism, news items, insights, stories, etc.

### Committee Members 1994/95

Mike Duggan .....	President
Alf Lizzio .....	Vice President
Rae Litzow .....	Secretary
Janet Millward .....	Treasurer
Judy Brown	
Patti Dietz	
Rex Newsome	

### Staff

Anne Cross .....	Director
Jane Sherwin .....	Training Prog Co-ord
Beverley Funnell .....	Consultant
Pam Collins .....	Resource Officer
Rosanne Ott .....	Training Consultant
Judith Browne .....	Office Co-ord
Melinda Rio .....	Admin Assist



### CRU President Mike Duggan says in his President's Report

“ I wish to propose a toast to Arthur Tunstall. This very fortunate man had the privilege of leading (managerially) the greatest sporting nation in the Commonwealth. But poor old Arthur was struck down with a very bad dose of 'foot-and-mouth' disease. This can be quite serious; it can drive people away, and one can be left quite alone. But since his comments, "Disabled athletes are an embarrassment to themselves and others", the issue of inclusion/exclusion has been on everyone's lips. And I imagine that Tunstall's ruckus had a significant impact on the decision in favour of the class action against the builders of the Convention Centre to make it accessible from the front entrance. So even Arthur Tunstall can, albeit inadvertently, assist us in amending societal transgressions. It is certainly no easy task identifying and working on 'cutting edge' issues in the disability field, so we need to take full advantage of every break that comes our way!! THIS IS WHY WE MUST CELEBRATE EVERY WINNING POST!”





# NEWS UPDATE



## Staff

There have been some changes in personnel at CRU during recent months and a few introductions are in order. Before this, we would like to acknowledge the contribution to CRU made by both **Kathryn Treston** and **Louise Harrison**. Earlier this year we said farewell to Louise, who had been our Office Administrator since 1990. Louise is now working in public relations and personnel in the high-flying world of telecommunications. Kathryn is back working with MAMRE after an absence of a decade.

**Judith Browne** and **Melinda Rio** have since joined the team at CRU and are quickly making their presence valued. Judith, who is well into genealogy and china painting, is the Office Co-ordinator; and Melinda, a dancer in her spare hours and a legend in her own lunch time, is the Administrative Assistant. Judith is proving to have a good eye for detail, and Melinda is a whiz on the keyboard - she can make

*lines bend in all directions!*

*It's great to have Judith and Melinda 'on board'.*

More recently **Pam Collins** and **Rosanne Ott** have joined CRU, resulting in our having to increase our car parking allocation. Pam has come to us from D.E.V.E.T.I.R. where she worked as a Disability Employment Officer, facilitating the recruitment of people with disabilities to positions within the Queensland State Government Public Service. Pam's arrival to take up the position of Resource Development Worker is a very significant step towards achieving a more effective use and development of CRU's resources, namely, articles, papers, references, bibliographies, tapes and

videos. It has been a long held hope of ours to have someone within CRU who could concentrate on resource development and to facilitate a timely and optimum match between the needs of leaders, change agents, practitioners, individuals and families, and relevant high quality resources. When you have a resource inquiry expect to find Pam pleasant, helpful and efficient. You will not be disappointed!

Rosanne has joined CRU for a few months to assist with our Education and Development Program in rural regions throughout the State. Rosanne, in recent years has been working in the area of Family Day Care where she has been influential in achieving integrated Family Day Care arrangements for young children with disabilities through a program called "Links" based in Logan. Rosanne is a great organiser, remaining calm and unflappable - well, on the outside anyway! It appears that Rosanne is well known throughout the State and when traveling to workshop locations invariably 'bumps' into someone she knows.

Already Rosanne has been involved in CRU workshop presentations in Cairns, Gympie, Emerald, Gladstone and Toowoomba.

The new arrivals join Anne Cross (Director), Jane Sherwin and Beverley Funnell.

## Farewell to Bronwyn



*Bronwyn and Terry Moloney, and their four children are setting off on an adventure which will take them to Fiji, America, Mexico, Central America, South America, England and Europe. They expect to be away for a year or two! Thanks for your contribution to CRU, Bronwyn. Farewell, have a wonderful time, and come back safely.*

## Ottawa Conference

There was an impressive contingent of Australians, including Anne and Jane from The Community Resource Unit, at the recent inaugural Social Role Valorisation - Normalisation Conference in Ottawa (May). The Australians, who also included **Lesley Chenoweth** and **Greg Mackay** from the Values in Action Association, joined with other participants from all over the world to mark and reflect on the first 25 years of SRV and Normalisation theory.

## Darcy Elks Events

Values in Action Assoc. Inc. recently hosted some successful events with **Darcy Elks**, a very experienced Social Role Valorisation trainer from the U.S. The events attracted not only people from all over Australia, but also **Jan Scown**, who manages a major de-institutionalisation project in Hamilton, New Zealand, and **Jane Pagler**, manager of a large accommodation support service in Cardiff, Wales. The events were a great opportunity to meet new people and renew friendships and networks.

The reflective format for the SRV theory proved to be very popular with the audience and the inclusion of model coherency in an Advanced PASSING workshop provided new learning opportunities for participants.

***"I have learnt that I can challenge my own way of thinking and be creative in my approach."***

### Great Decisions!

#### ***Closure of Challinor and Basil Stafford***

Congratulations and thanks to the Queensland Government and everyone who worked so hard to bring this about.

#### ***Access to the Convention Centre***

A great symbolic victory. Congratulations!

## Looking Ahead at Support Needs

On 5th November, Women's Electoral lobby brought together an interesting group of people from the disability area, women's groups and from older person's lobby groups to examine the issues of personal care support for children and adults who have a disability or who have become frail.

The seminar unanimously supported the introduction of a medicare type levy to fund personal care support.

Representatives of people with disability, women's groups and older persons will continue to meet and plan a campaign. If you want to get involved call:

**Beryl Holmes** WEL (07) 371 2638  
(Mon & Fri or a/h)

**Anne Cross** Community Resource Unit  
(07) 870 1022

**Win Metcalf-Kendall**  
Older Women's Network  
(07) 300 1521

### Advocacy Development Project Funded

As part of an initiative to develop advocacy groups throughout Queensland for people with disability, an Information and Planning workshop was held in Brisbane in March. The workshop was made up of representatives from community advocacy groups, Department of Family Services and Department of Human Services and Health.

The working party developed a submission for a 12 month project, commencing 1995, called the **Advocacy Development Project**. The project is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments, is auspiced by **Queensland Advocacy Inc.** and managed by a steering group.

It is planned that a major outcome of the project will be the building of a strong independent culture of advocacy in Queensland by stakeholders committed to the rights of people with disabilities.

## ***Project Work Undertaken by CRU***

### **The Schizophrenia Fellowship (South Queensland) Inc. - Future Directions?**

Jane Sherwin has completed a project which will assist Schizophrenia Fellowship in planning future directions for its organisation. Initially Jane facilitated a number of small group discussions, both in Brisbane and Bundaberg, as a way of bringing people with schizophrenia, and other chronic psychiatric disabilities, together to focus on what it would take for people with chronic psychiatric disabilities to live a valued life in the community.

Phase 2 of the project involved writing and organising the information in order to assist the Fellowship determine what it might support and its role in achieving positive outcomes for its members.

Jane has been assisted by three co-workers who have first hand experience of the mental health system.

Funding for the project has come from the Dept. of Family Services & Aboriginal and Islander Affairs.

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### **Workshop with ICAN**

(Service operated by H.A.R.D. - Handicapped Association, Redlands District)

This two day workshop, facilitated by Jane Sherwin and Beverley Funnell, was attended by a group of stakeholders (Executive Director, Co-ordinator, staff and consumers) of the ICAN service. ICAN serves adults with disabilities who are not presently in employment and for whom employment, at least at this stage, is not a meaningful option. The workshop explored

some fundamental questions about the needs of the people who use the service, what a 'good life' might look like for service users, the barriers that prevent people with a disability getting a 'good life' now and the most appropriate match between what people need and what the service provides.

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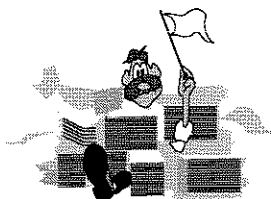
### **An Evaluation of a pilot program for consumer training and support for Commonwealth Disability Services Standards.**

This work was undertaken by Beverley Funnell for the Brisbane Office of the Department of Human Services & Health. The Brisbane Disability Program funded the work as part of a research and development project. Its purpose was to both evaluate a model of consumer training and support conducted by International Training Specialists, as well as an exploration of some critical issues to do with consumer participation in service delivery.

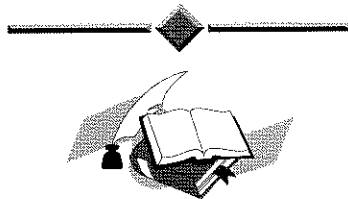
Bouquets to the Brisbane Office for recognising the complexities of the matter and showing a preparedness to examine the issues more closely. Consumer participation in a Departmental monitoring process raises a great deal of questions and concerns which the Brisbane staff were not prepared to gloss over. The pilot involved 19 employment services in S.E. Queensland. Recommendations in the report have been taken into account in the awarding of a contract for the provision of training and support for the next year for all employment services throughout Southern and Central Queensland. (See the 'Key Issues' section in this edition of *CRUcial Times*.)

## **Community Housing; Issues and Perspectives.**

This report on the housing needs of a number of individual persons who have an intellectual disability from the Mackay area, was done by Ms Sue Waite and assisted by Anne Cross. Funds for the work came through the Community Housing Section of the Department of Housing and Local Government. This Department appears keen to see innovative, personalised housing solutions developed to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in their own communities.



**A CRU Information Pamphlet (August, 1994)** has been produced and distributed. It is called "Making A Difference" and provides a framework to assist committees and staff in designing services and reviewing their effectiveness. Watch out for more Information Sheets in coming months.



## **CRU'S EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

### **The Orientation Program**

Fourteen participants attended the third Orientation Program in September. The previous two courses were successful, and with the benefit of useful feedback we continue to refine and improve the process and the content. The next Orientation Program in Brisbane will be in March, 1995.

### **The Leadership Program**

This year-long program is part of CRU's role in developing enduring and relevant leadership in those people who actively seek to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. The 1994 Leadership Development Program commenced in February with 13 participants, including 3 people with disabilities and 2 parents who have a son/daughter with a disability.

The group has come together for two short residential as well as sessions held each fortnight which focus on:-

- Values - assumptions, clarification, translation into action.
- Leadership Theories and Styles
- Relevant Historical, Legislative and Policy Impact on Community Life for people with disabilities.
- Personal Development.

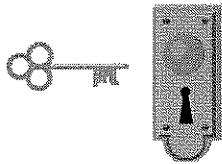
Participants have indicated that the opportunity for the serious exploration of issues through group discussion as well as through personal reflection has been very worthwhile.

For the **1995** program, CRU is investigating distance-learning methods as a way of bringing people together in regional areas. We will be interested to hear your ideas for the program and we will keep you informed.

### **Regional Workshops**

During November, CRU conducted several workshops in regional areas. "Social Roles: A Crucial Issue" was run in Cairns, Gympie, Emerald, Gladstone and Toowoomba. The workshop "Becoming Focused and Effective" was also offered in Cairns. The workshops introduced participants to some key issues and challenges in the disability field.

Call **Rosanne Ott** at CRU if you would like to see the workshop "Social Roles: A Crucial Issue" conducted in your town or region.



## KEY ISSUES

As was mentioned in the editorial we plan to include in *CRucial Times*, on a regular basis, some thoughts on key issues that may have arisen through our work or that have come to our attention in other ways. Inevitably the mere passing of time will continue to reveal ideas and practices which will undoubtedly impact on the lives of people with disabilities. We will attempt to illuminate the significance of such events and prompt others to critically examine some of these issues for themselves.

### **CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING SERVICE STANDARDS**

Across Australia consumers of Commonwealth funded employment services are currently being involved in monitoring the performance of their agencies in complying with service standards. While this may create a veneer of openness and respect for the views of consumers there is a real danger that consumers, are basically being asked to validate a purely bureaucratic process which has limited usefulness and is extremely open to manipulation by those who are more powerful. It is not that the Commonwealth Disability Program is not aware of these issues. The root of the problem lies in their handing over of responsibility for departmental processes to peak bodies and committee processes. There is still a need for strong leadership. Peak bodies by their very nature are not well placed to provide leadership which reflects questions and challenges us to leave our comfort zone. If change was always dependent upon having everyone agree we would still be living in caves. Doing the right thing often means going against the tide of what is fashionable and popular at the moment.

### **Consumer involvement - Real or Phoney?**

Rhetoric about consumer involvement is very fashionable in Australia at present. There is a real danger that in the rush to be seen to be 'doing' consumer participation greater emphasis will be placed on the appearance or the form of participation rather than on any meaningful substance.

It must be acknowledged that true consumer participation, as opposed to token participation, is difficult to achieve. This is particularly important to consider in respect of the participation of service users who have intellectual disabilities.

As Ashleigh Yeats said in his paper on "Pretending to Empower" (*Interaction*, 5 # 3, 1991):

**"....If you give someone power and choice beyond the level of their comprehension or if you fail to present the information in an understandable way (people) will frequently make 'lousy' choices."**

It is quite conceivable that service users can achieve varying levels of control and decision making over the role of services in their own lives while being almost unaware of how the service that assists them is managed. Debra Smith (*Interaction* 5 # 3, 1991) suggests that this is what consumers

want (control over their direct use of services), and that they are not interested in managing these services in an overall sense.

### **Who is responsible for Service Quality?**

With State Governments now following in the wake of the Commonwealth and adopting Service Standards and developing processes to involve consumers in monitoring the effectiveness of agencies in implementing them, it is timely to ask the question 'Who is responsible for service quality?'

The view, expressed in the Commonwealth documentation about the process, is that consumers of services, along with service providers, are somehow responsible for service quality. This does not seem to make any sense. In suggesting that consumers are responsible, it is implied that the least powerful and most vulnerable should share responsibility with those who are much better positioned and resourced.

Responsibility for individual service quality lies with the service provider. At a broader level it resides with the funding and regulatory body and the wider community. This responsibility should not be passed onto consumers. It is quite unreasonable to rely on consumers to be the initiators of change. They are the most vulnerable of the stakeholders, the least powerful and have the most to lose if the process goes wrong.

Nevertheless consumers do have a role. As the recipients of all our intentions and actions they are at the sharp end and are well placed to provide first hand feedback about what it means to be a client of a particular service. Service providers need to know whether or not the support they provide is relevant. There is little point in people speaking out if there is no one prepared to listen. Any notion of service quality, must incorporate the notion of a 'listening culture'. Quality in service

provision cannot exist without skillful listening. Service providers need to be in tune with the truth and reality of the life experiences of the people they serve. Views of consumers can easily be discredited. Accuracy gets confused with truth. It has been said that consumers say things which are inaccurate. They may get sequences muddled (as do most of us) or details mixed up, but they are rarely untruthful.

## **INSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

Many people in Queensland will have been pleased to hear the Government announcement that both the Challinor Centre (Ipswich) and the Basil Stafford Centre (Wacol) will be closed. From the vantage point of the present the assumed wisdom of the past can now be seen to be anything but wise.

A number of people have worked over many years to bring about major changes in our understanding of how institutions have contributed to the life wasting and neglect of people with intellectual disabilities. We thank them for their efforts and perseverance. The decision to close such places, is in some ways a vindication for those many parents and families who, from the beginning of their association with the institutional alternative (usually the only alternative), doubted and questioned the wisdom of the experts. Families, who at the time of their relative going to live at one of these centres, were often assured that it was the best option for their son or daughter. "Here they will learn". "Here they will be happy". Families handed over their sons and daughters and often saw them change into people they didn't recognise.

Even with the best intentions there is universal evidence to show that institutions, by their nature, cannot deliver lives for people with disabilities that include love, value, respect, opportunities, friendships, learning and discovery.



Closing institutions, however, does not automatically ensure that decent lives for people will get these things. Experience in other States and other countries is worth noting. In many places the bureaucratic solution has followed a recipe book formula. The model most frequently used has been a group or staffed house of 4 - 6 people with disabilities. Living in the community for people with disabilities often took on a whole set of characteristics that other citizens would not even recognise let alone tolerate.

The years went by and then it was discovered that the new utopia began to look a lot like "more of the same". In many places the process of closing institutions focused more on what was being closed rather than on what kind of community life was being created and developed for those people returning from institutions to live amongst us.

So we must ensure that reform is going to mean real change - a change of heart and not just a different setting or staffing arrangement. This is not very likely unless we come to grips with what the problems are with the old one before we embrace the new.

It must be remembered that when institutions were established in the first place their purpose was to segregate people from the community. To assume that this has fundamentally changed is somewhat romantic. The acknowledgment of the vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities and the instigation of effective safeguards will be required if living in the community is going to be a better and more humane option.

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## *From the desk of the Director*

### *1995 . . . . .*



During 1995, CRU will continue its focus on supporting and developing leadership around key challenges in the disability field. The rapid and complex changes that are happening in the field will continue to require all sorts of people in different positions of influence to take the circumstances that present and turn them into real and authentic opportunities for people with disabilities and their families. More than ever people with disabilities need people who will stand beside them, who will include them, who will seek out those things

in our communities that show promise of including them, who disseminate good ideas, who critique ideas and practices which are harmful, who strive to make services relevant and potent. There is no shortage of circumstances and issues that require us to give of our best if the situation of people with disabilities is to be advanced.

*Revisiting our Mission*

*CRU's Mission is to challenge ideas and practices that limit the lives of people with disabilities.*

*To inspire and encourage individuals and organisations to pursue better lives for people with disabilities.*

Using its resources, CRU will continue during 1995 to support and develop people who are trying to influence in all sorts of

ways what happens for people with disabilities.

## *Information Program*

Through our Information Program we hope to draw attention to information relevant to the address of key challenges. At present, **Pam Collins**, is heavily involved in reorganising our collection of resources to improve accessibility.

During 1995 Pam will be responsible for the production of *CRUcial Times* as well as the development of some monographs on important issues in the field. For some time, many people have bemoaned the lack of good quality local materials. Hopefully Pam will be able to encourage some of you to write and contribute ideas and insights about practice in the disability field.

Pam will keep you posted on these activities during 1995.

## *Education & Development*

### *Programs*

CRU will continue its focus on bringing you quality training programs. In 1995, we plan to continue to bring you Orientation Programs, short events on relevant issues, SRV and PASSING workshops and a Leadership Development Program outside of Brisbane. A flyer of events planned for 1995 will be available in the new year. Call **Jane Sherwin** if you want to discuss an idea or possibility.

## *Support, Guidance &*

### *Consultation with Agencies*

CRU continues to lend support to agencies who approach us for assistance in strengthening practices for the provision of quality services to people with disabilities.

This support includes: consultation, facilitation of review & planning, training, evaluation and service development support.

Some interesting projects are underway and some more are planned for 1995.

If you would like to discuss any support which CRU could offer your agency please call.

We have made a commitment in 1995 to improve our presence in regional areas by distributing written material, providing education and development programs, and supporting networks in local areas which are focused on leadership around key challenges.

CRU looks forward to contact with you during 1995, and hopes that 1995 brings you renewed energy, vision and capacity to effect changes in the lives of people with disability.

**Anne Cross**

## *~ A DREAM BECOMES A REALITY ~*

*A STORY BY SUE MILEY*

*There was this idea. The people with the idea held a meeting to explain the idea. A group of people met regularly to talk over the idea .... so the idea became a dream. The dream was worked over and polished until a favourable shape was formed. The dream like a child, to be cherished. Like a child, it costs money, so money was obtained to make the dream a reality. When the money come through .... Oh what rejoicing! .... A champagne celebration. Now the dream has become a reality .... it needs plenty of room for growth, but so do children. I am part of this process and proud of it.*

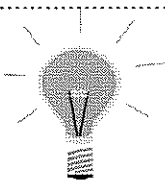
## LEARNING FROM HISTORY

*Someone once said that if we fail to learn from history then we are destined to repeat it.*

*Did you know that in 1865, aged, infirmed and disabled people were removed from a ward in the Brisbane Hospital and sent to the empty Quarantine Station at Dunwich on Stradbroke Island? Financial pressure was a major reason for this. For many years Dunwich became a dumping ground for those who did not meet the criteria of 'desirable citizen'. People who were classified as alcoholics, blind and otherwise physically disabled, and mentally ill were shipped off to join those mentioned above. Major discipline problems developed at Dunwich (Surprise! Surprise!) and consequently the major focus became control rather than treatment.*



## Snippets



## 'TIPS'

"TIPS" is a newsletter edited by **Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger** and published through the Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency in Syracuse, U.S.A. TIPS has been produced since 1981 and covers a wide range of interesting topics and themes relevant to the situation of devalued and marginalised people, including such things as new developments in areas such as service quality, evaluation, SRV themes, values in human services, change agency, death-making, perversions and aberrations in human services and many others.

CRU now has a complete set of TIPS newsletter dating back to the original issue in June, 1981, and thanks to the hard work of **Greg Mackay** CRU now has a complete index of the contents of all TIPS publications.

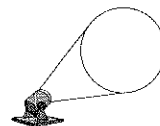
So if you are searching for material on a particular topic you may find something useful and definitely provocative in TIPS. Give us a call and we will endeavour to assist you.

## OTHER EVENTS

### D.A.S.U. Workshop

CRU and CRS will lead a two day workshop at D.A.S.U. for SKILLSHARE workers who want to improve their skills with people who have a psychiatric disability. By popular demand, this will be the second such workshop conducted by Jane Sherwin and Cate Fitzgerald (from CRS).

## ★ Rex in the ★ Limelight



You may not know, unless you read the Higher Education Supplement in the Weekend Australian newspaper, that the very photogenic **Dr Rex Newsome** a CRU committee member and a lecturer in Psychology at The University of Queensland was influenced towards university study by a chance meeting with **David Malouf**, the very successful Queensland author. After hearing Rex debate Malouf convinced him he should go to university. In the 1950's Rex was one of very few students with physical disabilities who went on to formal tertiary education.