
CRUCIAL Times

Community Resource Unit Inc.
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EDITORIAL

Year of Tolerance or Year of Rejection?

In this, the Year of Tolerance, some events of the past months have been deeply disturbing. The coverage of the debate around the inclusion/exclusion of children with disabilities in Queensland schools has extended beyond the education arena. While the main players on the media stage around this issue are a seven-year-old child, teachers and parents at her local school as well as a major union and an organisation of parents, there are serious implications for us all.

On one level, we have a situation where one little girl and her family have been exposed through a very public, political campaign by vested interest groups. The consequences are that the child and her family have been subjected to scrutiny and possible judgement by the public. While there was an Order to suppress the name of the child and the school, this came a day **after** those details had been published in the *Courier Mail*. This use of a child for political ends is contemptible.

At another level, however, there are very serious ramifications. The negative reactions to this child and the exclusion of children with disabilities from our schools have shown how very thin is the surface-veneer of tolerance and acceptance in our community. Deeply held prejudices against those who are different are waiting to bubble up to conscious expression and action. Several parents who have children with

disabilities at regular schools, and with no major problems to date, have now experienced anonymous abuse and threats. Others are fearful of a Notice of Suspension pending action by the Teachers Union. What we have here is a backlash.

This is not confined to inclusion in education. People who support adults with disabilities in the community have expressed concerns that the backlash will affect all people with disabilities living in the community. The issues about schooling have sparked discussion and concern about the "dangers" and "worries" of having people with disabilities living in local communities.

In a climate of anti-discrimination (expressed in policies of affirmative action, institutional reform, equal opportunity and social justice), it is indeed troubling that the true beliefs and assumptions held by many people about those with disabilities are contrary to this climate. These contradictions bring home the reality of age-old images of people with disabilities as menaces, child-like, sick, sub-human, and not like us. This means that while policies and legislation are useful and powerful aids to inclusion, they are not enough on their own. It will also require getting the right supports and appropriate resources, and learning new ways to do things if we are to include children with disabilities in ordinary schools. But there is also much to gain. People with disabilities have many contributions to make to our lives, some of which we may not even know exist. Inclusion is about tolerance, justice and human rights. The pursuit of these things is never easy but it is the moral and just path.

Lesley Chenoweth, Guest Contributor

Committee Members 1995/96

Mike Duggan	President
Alf Lizzio	Vice President
Judy Brown	Acting Secretary
Gail Richardson	Treasurer
Janet Millward	
Patti Dietz	
Rex Newsome	

Staff

Anne Cross	Director
Pam Collins	Resource Consultant
Beverley Funnell	Consultant
Melinda Rio	Admin Officer
Margaret Rodgers	Leadership Program Co-ord
Jane Sherwin	Training Prog Co-ord

would otherwise be unable to readily access such resources. (Our Resource Library is of course also available for use by people from the metropolitan area); (iv) publication of *CRUCIAL Times*. These outreach activities have meant some CRU staff being away from home more often than in past years, having to live out of suitcases and in hotel rooms. We sincerely thank those staff involved. We acknowledge their ability to be creative, imaginative and innovative in unfamiliar environments.

High on the disability agenda in Queensland is, of course, Institutional Reform. This naturally puts it high on CRU's own agenda. One of the major challenges which faces CRU is determining the best methods of responding to the reform process in ways which are appropriate and effective. For instance, a dilemma for CRU is: do we (solely) try to influence the driving forces of the Institutional Reform process; do we (solely) become involved in the programmatical issues; or do we endeavour to do both, and, as a result run the very real risk of making ourselves thin on the ground and becoming totally ineffectual? We must be very aware of this latter option and its pitfalls. We need to consider our Mission and Goals. We must reflect on our strengths (and our weaknesses). Only then will we be able to consider the 'what' and the 'how' in order to respond to the process in the most effective ways.

At the AGM I also took the opportunity to thank staff members individually. Impressive have been the quality and quantity of innovative strategies and programs that have emerged from the minds and hearts of CRU staff in recent times. Anne Cross, as Director of CRU, not only keeps the ship afloat, but is also very significant in planning its course and ensuring that not too many detours are attempted along the way. Anne's vision and her commitment to improving the lives of people with disability are commendable and admirable. Anne is capable of keeping an eye on the bigger, broader picture, while at the same time taking into account the most minuscule detail. I will always find this quite outstanding. As she often says herself, Anne's job sometimes resembles a juggler's routine. I don't think that Anne is referring to CRU as a circus, but who am I to interpret the unconscious? Thank you, Anne, for EVERYTHING! ➤



CRU President's Report

It was with much pleasure and honour that I presented the seventh President's Report of Community Resource Unit Inc. at the Annual General Meeting on 12 September, 1995.

This time last year I made the statement that I felt that Annual General Meetings should be occasions of celebration and are, of course, times when we can show solidarity with one another. CRU's Mission is: *To challenge ideas and practices which limit the lives of people with disabilities; to inspire and encourage individuals and organisations to develop and pursue better lives for people with disabilities.* As in all the past years, upholding these ideals has proven to be quite a formidable task this year, but I feel we have answered the call admirably. Identifying and working on 'cutting edge' issues in the disability field is certainly no easy task. It has proven to be physically and mentally exhausting, emotionally strenuous, and morally challenging.

Our work has taken on more of a state-wide outreach focus than previously. This current focus has resulted in: (i) The **Leadership Development Program** becoming available to those people living in regional areas; (ii) Presenting *Social Roles - a Crucial Issue workshops* in regional areas; (iii) Establishment of a **Resource Library** which provides support and information to people who

Unfortunately, because of study commitments this year, Rae Litzow has decided not to seek re-election to the committee. We are going to miss you, Rae. Over the years you have been a diligent committee member, acting both as Secretary and Treasurer, wearing both hats one

year. We thank you, Rae, for everything you brought to CRU. Since the AGM, the Committee has been pleased to welcome Gail Richardson as Treasurer.

Mike Duggan



The Dynamics of Inclusion

The subject of inclusion is very topical in relation to discussions about disability. It is articulated as a process in human service contexts, and as a descriptor for various functions and tasks such as inclusion networks, inclusion policies, inclusion kits and inclusion workers, to name but a few examples. Whilst some use the word "inclusion" synonymously with words/concepts such as integration, mainstreaming, community care, institutional reform and deinstitutionalisation, others prefer to note the socio-political particularity in the choice of such a word. However, there does appear to be a common desire to include people into a context that is perceived to represent "good".

To address this, two explicit approaches have been articulated and enacted. Firstly, there has been the technical approach which has sought to translocate historical deficit-focussed ideologies of disability within the public arena from institutional settings into community settings. Secondly, there has been the legislative approach, which has sought to address the socio-political context of processes of disablement. However, I wish to contend that there is another approach which needs to be made explicit. This is an ethical approach.

Superficially, to examine the notion of inclusion within an ethical framework allows for analyses of what constitutes principles such as: what is good or bad; what is right or wrong; what is just or unjust; what is beneficent or malificent? and so on. This

engagement has taken place, to some degree, in the rights-based discourse contemporarily driving the disability agenda. However, an ethical approach also allows for much deeper analyses to take place, particularly in regard to identifying and addressing profound processes of exclusion.

It becomes imperative that 'inclusion' be acknowledged as a multi-faceted, politically and ethically loaded concept, which is not reducible to any single prescriptive formula.

An ethical approach discusses (a) subjectivity - what is the moral agency of various stakeholders and what is the historical impact on the self-other relationship in terms of individual identity and collective community? (b) the historical socio-political context in which the discussion is embedded, and the constraints thereof to factors such as power differentials, the economy and productivity, and (c) the dualistic structure of modern Western society which legitimates hierarchical oppositions of such notions as ability and disability. To participate in an ethical conversation, then, is to explore various ethical methodologies which confront, challenge and/or construct new contemporary understandings of inclusion.

In doing so, it becomes imperative that "inclusion" be acknowledged as a multi-faceted, politically and ethically loaded concept, which is not reducible to any single prescriptive formula.

Jayne Clapton



NEWS UPDATE



CRU recently hosted a four-week working visit to Brisbane by Maralyn Robinson from Milpara Aged Cottage Homes Service in Adelaide. Maralyn has been engaged for the past two years in a unique program that assists aged people to return to community living after they experienced declining health as well as a loss of independence following admission to a nursing home. When surveyed, residents commented:

"I don't see my grandchildren here, this is no place for them to be." "My family visits are always restricted by my lack of privacy." "The only things I have from my entire house are a radio and TV." "We are always waiting, waiting, waiting." "I found the transition from home to here very difficult." "It is a bit like being in gaol, no one wants to share."

As a result of this survey and other discussions with residents and their families, a plan was formulated whereby Milpara service still gives care to the same number of people (146) but seventy of those people are in the community (rather than under the one roof), have their own co-ordinator and are located and supported entirely within the community.

During two half-day workshops in Brisbane Maralyn related many amusing, instructional and inspirational stories of program successes. All of them challenged the stereotype of age and aged-care. The work has been guided by the adoption of Social Role Valorisation (SRV) principles, and its outcomes testify to the vision of team workers who find creative solutions in responding to individual needs. This is the sort of vision that is needed when we, as Queenslanders, look for ways of welcoming into the community people who have been residents in disability services. Maralyn's presentations to disability service groups and individuals while in Brisbane sparked the imagination of what is truly possible! □

LUNCH-TIME SEMINAR SERIES

On August 4, Roger Slee presented an incisive seminar on the topic of education. On the eve of his departure to take up the position of Professor of Education at Goldsmith's College, University of London (and having found that his vast collection notes has inadvertently been sold at his garage sale), Roger entertained and challenged the audience. He encouraged us to think about the *philosophy* of education, the *politics* of exclusion and ascertainment, and the *language* of inclusion, integration and special schools.

Roger stressed that people can often say, "this is an inclusive school" or "inclusive classroom", but what happens is vastly different. While the language suggests that something has changed in the school or classroom, a closer look reveals that children with disabilities are still excluded through reallocation of 'special' resources. The terminology has been adjusted but the oppression is the same.

*A student was found to be
"profoundly girl"*

Inclusion is more about culture than allocation of resources, according to Roger. It is about curriculum, school organisation and the *way* we teach. If the culture of schooling were to be questioned, we would give more thought to the reconstruction of schools than to the reallocation of resources. Roger believes it is schools themselves that need 'ascertainment' not individual students. He spoke eloquently of the pathology of schools and re-framed the questions that are at the heart of current intense debates on education. ➤

Roger used a wonderful analogy in re-framing the question of who should be in special schools. Using the term "profoundly girl", he spoke of the way in which in recent times, girls had been found to have a high degree of not succeeding, but pointed out that they were not ascertained for their degree of femaleness in order to help them to succeed in a patriarchal schooling system. □

Other Speakers in the Lunch Time Series

October 6 **Kevin Treston**
Why is Leadership Important?

November 24 **Jenny Fitzgerald**
Threats to the Lives of People
with Disabilities

Professor Dick Sobsey Forum

Dick Sobsey is well known as researcher, advocate and the writer of several books including *Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities: the End of Silent Acceptance?* On his recent visit to Australia, Professor Sobsey accepted an invitation from Griffith University, I.D.S., Family and Community Services and SAND, to present a

half-day forum in Brisbane on the topic of abuse and neglect of people with disability. The forum presentation reflected his rigorous research in developing an understanding of abuse and its prevention. Professor Sobsey reported some findings which were surprising. For example, he found that if we assume that disability makes people more vulnerable, then it seems we could assume that a disability which affects a person's ability to communicate would increase the person's vulnerability. But, he says, so far there is little to indicate that this is so. Having a disability of whatever-kind seems to increase the risk of abuse, because abuse seems to have a social mechanism. What he does find, however, is that the risk of abuse in institutions is twice as high as it is in community settings. Service systems themselves *add* risk for a person.

The link which he makes between the nature of the disability and the abuse is that severe disability predicts the type of service to be used. What society does when it places people with severe disabilities in an institution, he says, is to take vulnerable people and make them *more vulnerable*. Explained in this way, it becomes easier to understand the "social mechanism" of abuse to which he refers. The forum was comprehensive, exploded some cherished myths, identified some bad research practices, and was a unique opportunity to increase our understanding of some of the pre-conditions that lead to abuse. □



CRU'S EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The main events in the past few months have been a Gold Coast workshop on *Social Roles: a Crucial Issue in your Community* and a four-day *Orientation Program* in Brisbane. Doug Godwin has written an entertaining critique of the Gold Coast workshop (see p.7). Thanks, Doug. We're pleased that this workshop, which has been conducted throughout Queensland, has met with such favourable responses.

The *Orientation Program* is designed for people who are new to the disability field or for those who are changing roles. The recent program was high in energy and guest speakers came with a range of experiences and wonderful contributions. Feedback on the program was presented via giant post-cards which were addressed to the workplaces of participants and attached to the walls of the training room. Messages included: *What can I say? I have been enlightened, amazed, had moments of pain and many moments of inspiration. No, I am not on a pilgrimage in an Ashram in India, I've been at a CRU workshop. Wish you were here.*

Planning for next year has commenced and proposed dates for SRV Theory and PASSING can be found in an enclosure to this newsletter.

Jane Sherwin

Leadership Development Program

The 1995/96 Leadership Development Program is well under way. This year for the first time, CRU has offered the program to people who live in, or close to, Gympie, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. There are a total of fifteen participants from these three regions.

The Leadership Development Program is offered to people who are already involved in leadership and who are looking for ongoing development and sustenance. Current participants have become leaders for a variety of reasons: because they work in the area; some because they have a disability; because they are the parents of a person with a disability; because of committee involvement, and for some people it is a combination of these factors.

In order to address the many complexities that face the disability field, CRU believes it is important to invest energy and resources in key people around the state.

It is known that adults learn best by doing, or by working with others and reflecting on their own experience, and these principles have been integrated into all aspects of the program. One of the key aims is to equip participants with the skills to navigate the changes that must take place in the disability field. The plan is to develop skills that will help them to drive the change as well as to successfully ride with it.


All members of the program will meet regularly with the other participants from their own town or region. In this, the first part of the program, they are working on a group project about their own region which will help them to understand their own particular culture and history. Having learned some theory about "groups" at the first residential, participants now have the perfect opportunity to put theory into practice. In the second part of the program (early 1996), they will undertake individual "change" projects and will continue to meet regularly to support each other.

In addition, there will be four residential workshops which will bring together the fifteen participants from the three regions. These residentials provide an opportunity for the building of networks and relationships, for thought-provoking discussion and presentations, and for time-out to reflect and to care-for-self. The first residential was at Labrador (on the Gold Coast) in August. These are some comments from participants:

I feel humble and privileged to be part of this course. • Hearing the viewpoints of other people was great. • Learning about the dynamics of groups made many past experiences clear. • It helped me identify my qualities a little better and hopefully use them confidently from now on. • I'd like it to go on forever. • A lot of laughter with the learning. • I feel positive in that I am learning about very relevant topics with people I consider to be my peers. • The massage was wonderful!. • I'm planning to be more conscious of how I operate in a group and to implement some of the ideas shared.

We are looking forward to meeting up again in November to hear about the regional "change" projects. We'll also start investigating "systems". The more we recognise and understand the systems that we are operating in, the more prepared we will be for influencing them.

Margaret Rodgers



It was this time last year that Rosanne Ott was welcomed to CRU for what was to be a three month period to help us with some training events. Three months turned into four months, then six months and before we knew it twelve months had passed. Unfortunately we ran out of excuses to keep her here and finally had to let her go on to other work. Thankfully, Rosanne is working on a project in which CRU is also involved, so we still see her often. Rosanne, thank-you for the tremendous contribution you made to CRU. Your charm and grace are missed.

Post Cards from the Regions

Ol' Leadfoot Meets
the Stop'n Think Team

A 'Social Roles' Workshop Experience



It seemed simple enough. Read the book. See the movie. Bob's your uncle. Wrong.

I admit to having wondered why we were lining up on the grid for just one hour and a half of racing. *And* at 1.30pm on a balmy Thursday afternoon! The introductory session turned out to be a deceptively light-hearted breeze through the practice laps. A pleasant ninety minutes or so of mooching around the pits, getting to know the track, the stewards, the comfort stops, the other drivers. On reflection, it was a very clever way of getting the necessities behind us without cutting Friday's valuable hours. More subtly, it was a way of saying that a little more than the usual commitment was needed from the drivers, and don't give us any of that I'm-too-busy stuff.

Jane (Sherwin) and Rosanne (Ott) got it right. Why fritter away the morning's fresh impetus and enthusiasm with engine tune-ups and race-plan details? These stewards had done it before.

It took only ten minutes of Friday morning's session to realise that driving the SRV highway had very little to do with planting the foot. Obviously racing in any context just won't do as a metaphor, sustained or otherwise, in talking SRV. Leave it.

Having made a nodding acquaintance with Wolfensberger's concepts in his paper, *A Brief Introduction to Social Role Valorization*, and having internalised his warning that a telegraphic account of his concepts didn't make for real insights, and could even be perilously misleading, I was keen to progress from a nod to well, perhaps a hand-shake. In my meagre readings I saw a refreshing earthiness and humanity in his choice of instances and anecdotes to illustrate his conceptual framework. Nevertheless, I had not found this framework easy to grasp, and the implications of the seven themes in particular were quite difficult to get a handle on.

The morning session on Friday brought home that an appreciation of SRV will not happen in some sort of academic, navel-gazing vacuum. There is an exercise of the intellect, sure! But this is not like reading and talking about John Locke or astrophysics. Clearly, the concepts of SRV are rooted in the lives of people and their treatment of one another. Time and again, we were asked to sort through our little box of life experiences for real things, real people, real feelings to illumine the concepts and the jargon. Don't get me wrong! This was not bleeding hearts stuff. One chap with a disability came up with an uncut gem of a statement every now and then, quietly passing the gift of reality to us in a plain wrapper. And the facilitators modelled their teachings like crazy, welcoming every input from the floor, cutting, polishing and valorizing so that every contribution became a stored symbol of our individual and collective worth.

Nor was there time for catharsis to set in. Jane and Rosanne were very good at changing place and pace at the whiteboard whenever introspection looked in danger of becoming ruminative.

Their use of case studies, pretend or otherwise, was a huge help in focusing insightfully. I like to think that I have a better (but obviously still imperfect) grasp of the conceptual framework of SRV, and in particular of how the implications of Wolfensberger's seven themes are embodied in his schema for the prevention of social devaluation. That these case studies were people with names and attributes helped me to look beyond the written pages into that dark hole which is the deprivation of love, of respect, of even the most niggardly acceptance.

A bonus for me was meeting a range of people who obviously want to understand disability, better still, who want to contribute to change, and who cannot accept where lots of people with a disability are, in almost every aspect of their day-in-the-life-of.....

It was a long, searching Friday, not the easiest day I have spent, yet my appetite is more than whetted for the SRV Theory event. Thanks, Jane and Rosanne. Did you say 8.30am to 9.30pm? For three days? Well, I am looking for help to clarify my ideals, values and strategies, as promised. Obviously a case of do not go gentle into that ... was it Dylan Thomas? No matter. ➤

Like most, I have an axe to grind. A member of our family has an intellectual disability, I've recently started part-time work in the area of disability services assessment, and I am trying to educate myself about independent advocacy in its various forms. There's heaps to be done.

Just let there be world enough and time

Doug Godwin



Creating Inclusive Communities in North Qld

Towards the end of 1994, a group of local leaders working in the human service area came together to organise some workshops on creating inclusive communities. The aim was to run some practical workshops which discussed strategies on including people with disabilities in the community. These workshops took place in July this year.

The purpose of this article is to share with readers what has happened following the workshops. When organising the workshops, the most important factor we aimed for was that people attending would leave with a sense of commitment and would put their learning into practice. However, before explaining the results that have occurred so far, it is necessary to share why and how this project got off the ground.

Much rhetoric is heard about involving the community in the lives of people with disabilities, but there is still a dominance of paid service relationships. We hoped to shift this trend and sought the assistance of John McKnight. John is a Professor at the Northwestern University in the USA. He is well known for his expertise and his belief that systemic services are primary barriers between people who have a disability and the community.

John was unable to come to Australia but he suggested Sandra Nahornoff, a Canadian who has had several years' experience in establishing community connections for sixty isolated, labelled people. Sandra worked closely with John McKnight during that period. John contributed to the workshops by preparing a

special video. The idea behind these workshops was to incorporate a local theme along with the Canadian perspective provided by Sandra.

Firstly, a group of 'leaders' was identified to participate in a two-day workshop. Secondly, a one-day presentation was held in Townsville and Cairns. This presentation was aimed at community workers, as well as parents/families, people with disabilities and the community in general. Thirdly, service club seminars were held in both Townsville and Cairns to raise the profile of service clubs in playing a major role in opening up community options for people with disabilities.

People who attended these workshops were asked to make a commitment, by way of contract, to create a more inclusive community for people with disabilities. What has occurred so far is listed below:

- ❖ Frances Carpenter from *Tablelands Community Link* has held two meetings in Atherton. The first was for people with disabilities, parents, carers and workers. The second meeting was with local powerbrokers; people who make things happen in a small town. Both meetings were well attended, with approximately fifty people at each. The meeting with the powerbrokers, which was hosted by the Mayor (a clever move by Frances), was very effective because all participants were keen to begin helping people with disabilities gain access to their groups, clubs, associations, etc. From this particular workshop two people with disabilities were welcomed into communities, and Frances is confident of further connections being made as a result of this meeting.
- ❖ Irene Prowse from *Burdekin Flexi Respite Service* is also running some workshops for the local community in the Burdekin, again targeting leaders in the community.
- ❖ Those people who were identified as leaders and who participated in the two-day workshop have since consistently shared their

understanding of the principle ideas of community-inclusion with colleagues in their own organisations.

- ❖ Staff of *Into Rec* have been invited to talk to Service Clubs as a response to their representatives attending the service club seminar in July. Also, *Into Rec* have undertaken a series of community inclusion presentations to local church groups.
- ❖ Another response from the workshops is that there is a changing attitude from service workers such as: moving from a service-way-of-thinking; greater willingness to accept challenges themselves; and becoming more inviting towards community members. It has been helpful that managers, co-ordinators, and others have given 'permission' to their staff to encourage more community contacts.
- ❖ Ric Thompson from Department of Family and Community Services has organised further workshops in the community for service workers and church groups. Ric has also assisted in the workshop presentations in Atherton and Burdekin.
- ❖ Pam Steele-Wareham, Regional Manager of *Endeavour* has discussed the principles of community-inclusion with branch managers. The involvement of *Endeavour* staff at the workshops has assisted the organisation with their 'quality of life' plans and some connections for individual consumers have already been made with the community.
- ❖ Susan Parkin from *Volunteer Friends* program has been actively encouraging co-ordinators of the service to further connect people with disabilities into wider social circles, such as groups and clubs. This idea has been seen favourably in the program itself.

These are just some of the things that are happening as a result of the recent workshops. Additionally, a committed group of people continues to meet on a regular basis to share what changes they see occurring for people with

disabilities and what they are actively doing to encourage this.

We need to continue to create a more diverse community that welcomes all people. A community that recognises the gifts and talents of all of its members is a powerful and strong community. This vision needs to continue to be shared with the wider community.

Jane Keast
Into Rec, Townsville

I recently had occasion to visit a hostel ... in this hostel lived a large number of people ... some had the labels of psychiatric disability, intellectual disability, alcoholic and so on ... I felt deeply disturbed that our society, my town, my neighbourhood can treat people like this.... After seeing such desolation I wrote the following

I lie in my warm bed, secure, loved, protected.
I am grieving, grieving for the people I met.
They too lie in their beds, seeking sleep. But
not with the solace of a brighter morrow or the
soft folds of the covers, or favourite books by
the bed.

The drought of life's joys, the floods of life's
pain.
The barrenness of treasured things.
The sparseness of comfort.
Deciduous love.
The chill of rejection.

Jane Sherwin

***We are not here to defend inclusion,
but to expose exclusion as a
practice of apartheid***

Kevin Cocks, key speaker at public rally
for Inclusive Education in Brisbane
October, 1995.