

Oral Submission

Senate Inquiry
National Citizenship Indicators

Oral Submission by Ruth Crow
July 24th 1995.

1. TWO AIMS IN MAKING SUBMISSION

- A. To consider where and how ideas on Citizenship are being developed.
- B. To propose some indicators for a policy on Citizenship.

2. WHERE AND HOW IDEAS ON CITIZENSHIP ARE BEING DEVELOPED.

- a) Recognition that locally based community organisations contribute to the moral and cultural transformation of society... especially in education, health, housing, libraries... and that most such organisations have thoughtfully worded value judgements which indicate their idea of citizenship.
- b) Recognition that there has been a large proportion of women participants in local organisations and thus the value judgement statements reflects their ideas on citizenship.
- c) Recognise that local government is the sphere of government most accessible to those involved in community organisations and thus local government has a very significant role to play in helping the community to establish benchmarks for citizenship.
- d) Recognise that the concept of participative democracy in urban planning has only recently been popularised. (in UK the Skeffington Report in 1969 was an innovative report) and that the inquiry on citizenship is part of extending this concept.
- e) Recognise that the process of participatory planning is an empowering experience and enables participants to more effectively see the value of their contribution to society (changing those involved from being a conglomeration of grateful passive recipients to being members of collectives of informed participants) and thus using methods that further this empowerment

3. INDICATORS FOR A POLICY ON CITIZENSHIP BENCHMARKS

- a) The right and responsibility to participate in defining local needs and to participate in strategies to meet them.
- b) The right and responsibility for affirmative action directed at eradicating all forms of male domination over females, giving special attention to local participatory organisations
- c) The right and responsibility to easily accessible

information services so that the social conditions can assist people to gain confidence in their own abilities.

d) The right and responsibility to popularise respect for the natural environment and other species so that human needs are designed in such a way that the "needs" of other forms of life are also taken into account.

e) The right and responsibility to be educated about Australian history, especially in regard to our indigeneous peoples, including history of the nineteenth century colonisation and the gradual strengthening of Australia's links with the Asian Pacific area. (*It is disappointing that Australian studies is no longer strongly promoted at secondary level in Victorian schools*)

f) The right and responsibility to heed the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, recognising that the adult generation not only has to provide the physical living standards for the younger generation but is also responsible for its moral and cultural development. (*"The child should be brought up in the knowledge that its talents should be developed in the service of human-kind" ..this statement from the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child is quoted from memory so is not word perfect...*)

g) The right and responsibility to provide access to education for people of all ages, ensuring that the development of information technologies (for example the Information Superhighway) do not result in dividing the community into "the information rich" and the information poor".

.....

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SENATE INQUIRY ON CITIZENSHIP INDICATORS

78 written submissions have been received by the Senate Standing Committee on National Citizenship Indicators. My written submission is no 76.

When making my oral submission I mentioned the role of the *Victorian Education School Papers and School Readers* of the 1930s and how citizenship was promoted in their pages, saying that in those days these concepts helped to promote ideas of citizenship which were appropriate to that era.

On receiving my copies of the 78 written submissions I was interested to read that Submission No 2, by Emeritus Professor P.W. Musgrave (Monash University) has based his submission on a study of "certain prescribed school texts used during these years so important in the growth of the nation texts" ... ie the *Readers* first published in 1928 and the *School Papers* mainly from the 1930s.

Prof. Musgrave concludes :-

In general this case study can be seen to imply three main lessons for

education for citizenship. This part of the curriculum must be wider in its conscious focus than has often been the case in recent years; it must have an agreed minimum content to be taught to all future citizens from whatever background and thus needs serious discussion, probably at national level; finally relevant curricula in each school needs to take account of local differences, which, however tolerant we want to be, may encounter obstacles to acceptance because of attitudes brought to Australia from outside that cannot be allowed to exist in the contemporary view of Australian citizenship."

(Submission to the Senate Inquiry on National Citizenship Indicators, Volume 1., page 3 to 33).

.....
FIRST STEPS IN PARTICIPATING IN THE CITIZENSHIP INQUIRY.

1. More information about the Inquiry may be obtained from :-
 The Secretary,
 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee
 Parliament House, Canberra 2600
 Phone (06) 277 3561.

2. Check to see if the documents from the Senate Inquiry are in your local library. To date the Commonwealth Government have printed a "Discussion Paper" by Michael Salvaris and the 78 written submissions, hopefully, copies of the oral submissions will soon be available. If it is not possible for the full set of documents to be in all libraries, at least, all libraries should provide information about which libraries do have copies. In other words try to ensure that libraries are playing a key role in popularising participation in the Inquiry through providing information. .

3. A Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights has recently been established at Deakin University. In August the Centre held a conference on "Playing with Differences, Playing with Fire" and later in the year will hold a second conference on "Diversity" and in 1996 they will be co-sponsoring with the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex, a workshop on British and Australian research into auditing democracy.

For more information :-

Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights
 Faculty of Arts, Deakin University,
 Geelong, Victoria 3217.
 Telephone (052) 27 2113 and FAX (052) 27 2155.

.....
ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

The December 1995 issue of Ecoso Exchange Newsletter (published by the Crow Collection Association) will feature articles on Citizenship. If you would like to contribute to this publication please send in your articles before the end of October.

If you would like a copy of my written submission to the Citizenship Inquiry please phone me on (03)9329.8685, or leave a message for me on (03)9688.4754 or FAX (03)688.4324.

Ruth Crow.

