

The myth of equality

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Introduction

For many years the National Union of Australian University Students has been campaigning for improvements in Australian education. Such areas as teacher training, the role of schools, and resources for tertiary education have taken up a great deal of our energy.

Over the last three years NUAUS has devoted much of its energies to publicising the plight of disadvantaged groups in the Australian community. Abschol, our Aboriginal Affairs Department, has been strengthened and we have just set up a Social Action portfolio. As part of this general concern we have become very concerned about the lack of opportunity through education from which many Australians suffer.

This increased concern resulted in the decision by our 1969 February Council to launch a campaign aimed at making the existence of inequalities in education a public issue. A year ago this subject was only at the fringe of the educational debate, it was a virtual non issue.

Since our decision the subject of inequalities has moved from the fringe, though it is still far from as important a topic as it should be. Our 1970 Council made it quite clear that we intend to continue this campaign until all vestiges of inequality are eliminated. This may take years but we hope that because of our efforts it will not take forever.

As one part of our 1969 campaign we produced an eighty one page set of fact sheets on inequalities. The Fact Sheets were intended to provide our campaigners with the necessary ammunition. They became more than just an internal document. Public demand has rapidly exhausted our stocks, indeed we have numerous unfilled orders.

When the time came to produce more copies it was decided that a different approach was required. This book is intended to provide the facts. It will also argue the case for specific reforms. The original material has been updated. Equally important is the addition of pictorial material. Most Australians cannot visualise what it is to suffer from inequalities. I hope the photos reproduced here will add point to the facts, figures and suggestions.

I have chosen a deliberately combative title **The Myth of Equality**. Australians continue to believe that ours is an egalitarian society. This belief is accepted without any referral to the evidence. This book constitutes part of the contrary evidence.

The Myth of Equality is dedicated to the half a million Australian children at present suffering from inequalities in education.

Tom Roper,
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Acknowledgements

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