

Who are we?

Canberra Skeptics Incorporated is a private organisation formed in 1986. Our members and supporters include educators, academics, tradespeople, and people in business, the media and the public sector.

What we have in common is an interest and concern about extraordinary and unsubstantiated claims that are too often made in many different fields – health, science, history and the arts.

We are closely associated with, but formally separate from, other skeptical groups around the country, including the Sydney-based Australian Skeptics.

What do we stand for?

We believe that the rise of irrational, uncritical thinking poses a threat to the intellectual and material quality of our civilisation.

We oppose the popular media's generally uncritical and sensationalist coverage of reports of the paranormal. We draw attention to the possibility of natural and ordinary explanations for extraordinary phenomena. Some specific areas we have investigated are:

- alternative health claims, such as the anti-immunisation movement
- pseudohistory like *The Da Vinci Code* and *1421*
- financial scams
- religious literalism, especially creationism
- UFOs and alien abductions
- psychic, occult, and New Age practices, such as astrology
- conspiracy theories, such as claims that the Apollo moon landings were staged in a Hollywood studio!

What we are not

We are not iconoclasts – we strive to maintain open minds and to apply the principle of 'seek the evidence' to all claims. History shows that some remarkable phenomena have indeed been verified, such as meteorites and the platypus. But what distinguishes these is that they were found to be supported by solid evidence – unlike most of today's claims about the paranormal.

Nor are we an atheist group – we do not as an organisation oppose religious belief in all its forms. We are, however, critical of attempts, such as creationism, to misuse religion to explain natural phenomena and to undermine science.

How do I find out more?

The best way is to come along to one of our monthly meetings. These are usually held on the 13th of each month (naturally), at the Visions Theatre at the National Museum of Australia. (But please confirm date and venue via our Website – sometimes they change.) Most of our meetings involve a talk by a distinguished scholar on a skeptical issue, followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

You can also contact us by mail at:

Australian Skeptics
PO Box 555
Civic Square ACT 2608

Or via e-mail at:

act1@skeptics.com.au

Or check out our Website:

www.skeptics.com.au/act/

APPLICATION TO JOIN CANBERRA SKEPTICS INC

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POST CODE: _____

PHONE: _____

(H) _____

(W) _____

(M) _____

E-mail: _____

Amount: \$ _____

Signature: _____

Please mail with cheque to:

Canberra Skeptics
PO Box 555
Civic Square ACT 2608

Or - simply bring your payment to our next talk.

Membership fees for Canberra Skeptics are currently

- a joining fee of \$2 for new members plus
- an annual fee of \$8 payable by 30 June each year, or \$5 for those with limited incomes.

Another good way to get a feel for what we stand for is to visit the Website of Australian Skeptics: www.skeptics.com.au

Our Sydney colleagues publish a quarterly journal, *the Skeptic*, the Australian skeptical community's main voice to the wider community, the media and each other about what scientific and rational analysis tells us about paranormal claims. Contributors include many leaders in their professional fields. *the Skeptic* conducts investigations and publicises the results; its findings are sometimes amusing, often sobering and always fascinating.

We seek to be informative and to celebrate the real marvels of this planet and the universe - and to maintain a sense of humour!

DO YOU BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU ARE TOLD?



Tooth Fairy

Canberra Skeptics is the organisation for responsible and inquiring people with common sense and a social conscience. We encourage an investigative and scientific approach to establishing the truth about claims of paranormal, pseudoscientific and other unproven phenomena. We aim to help free our society from the dangers of irrational thinking – **and enjoy ourselves as we do so!**

We challenge remarkable claims by seeking the evidence

We encourage people to think critically about extraordinary claims