



National Skeptics Convention 2003

CSIRO Discovery Centre,
Canberra, 22-24 August

Programme

Friday 22 August

12.30 – 5.15 pm Young Skeptics

12.30 Young Skeptics registration

Seeking the evidence

- 1.00 Welcome and introduction. Dr Pete Griffith, President, Canberra Skeptics
- 1.10 Seeing is believing — or is it? Nick Johnson, Magician, Mr Funny Bones
- 1.35 How do we know it is really so — was the moon landing faked? Peter Barrett, Vice President, Canberra Skeptics
- 2.00 The big topics in small bites — cults, telepathy and more. Lynne Kelly, Science, Maths & Technology teacher and author
- 2.45 Tea break
- 3.10 Blood and guts – the ins and outs of psychic surgery. Pete Griffith and friends
- 3.35 Aliens on Mars? Neal Newman, NASA representative to Australia
- 4.15 Cartoon competition. Selection of winners and award of prizes**

5.00 – 6.40 pm: Convention registration

7.00 – 10.30 pm: Open forum

Alternative remedies - the good, the bad and the ugly

- 7.00 Welcome and introduction. Barry Williams, CEO, Australian Skeptics Inc
- 7.10 Alternative remedies - what are the options? Dr Pete Griffith, President, Canberra Skeptics
- 7.40 Why do people believe in and use unproven or useless treatments? Prof Bob Montgomery, Head, Centre for Applied Psychology, University of Canberra
- 8.10 Is there a place for non-evidence based remedies? (Speaker to be announced)
- 8.40 Coffee break
- 9.00 Dangerous practitioners. Peter Bowditch, VP NSW Skeptics, and indefatigable exposé of quackery
- 9.30 The alternative remedy industry — the bottom line. (Speaker to be announced)
- 10.00 General Discussion
- 10.30 Close



Saturday 23 August

8.00 – 9.00 am: Convention registration

9.00am – 1.15 pm. Faith, fear and superstition

- 9.00 Welcome. Dr Pete Griffith, President, Canberra Skeptics
9.05 Missing links. Prof Colin Groves, Professor of Anthropology, ANU
9.50 Fear of death, superstition and the quest for immortality. Dr Trevor Case, Research Fellow, Department of Psychology, Macquarie University
10.35 The Bible – history or myth? Robert Macklin
11.20 Coffee break
11.45 Lies, damned lies – and statistical traps. Dr Borek Puza, Lecturer in Statistics, ANU
12.30 Conspiracies – inventing things to believe in. Peter Bowditch, VP NSW Skeptics, indefatigable exposé of quackery
1.15 Lunch

2.10 p m – 5.30 pm. It's all in the mind you know

- 2.10 Welcome. Dr David Wilson, Treasurer, Canberra Skeptics
2.15 Holes in the plot. Richard Saunders, President, NSW Skeptics
3.00 Self-deception and wishful thinking. Jennie Louise, Philosophy Dept, ANU
3.45 Coffee break
4.10 Mindpower: fact, fiction and fakery. Overseas guest from the UK, Ian Rowland, mind reader and mind motivator, author of *The Full Facts Book of Cold Reading*
6.00 pm. Mixer

7.00 pm. Conference dinner The Discovery Centre atrium

MC — Barry Williams, CEO of Australian Skeptics and Editor of *the Skeptic*
Skeptic of the Year and Bent Spoon Awards plus Other Home-Spun Entertainment

Sunday 24 August

9.00am – 1.15 pm: Getting the message across

- 9.00 Welcome – Vicki Moss, Secretary, Canberra Skeptics
9.05 Professor Emeritus Chris Bryant, AM, Centre for the Public Awareness of Science, ANU
9.50 Professor Sue Stocklmayer, Director, Centre for the Public Awareness of Science, ANU
10.35 Capturing the young. Lynne Kelly, teacher, writer and novelist
11.20 Coffee break
11.45 Annie Warburton, Hobart's leading radio broadcaster
12.30 Professor Mike Gore, Centre for the Public Awareness of Science and founder of Questacon
1.15 Lunch

2.10 – 5.30 pm: The Planet and beyond

- 2.10 Welcome – Peter Barrett, Vice-President, Canberra Skeptics
2.15 Extraterrestrial life — seeking the evidence. Dr Jeremy Bailey, Astronomer at the Anglo-Australian Observatory, and Associate Director of the Australian Centre for Astrobiology, Macquarie University. (To be confirmed)
3.25 Coffee break
3.50 Meteorological myths, mistakes and mumbo jumbo. Steve Symonds, meteorologist emeritus
4.35 Watch out for the Happy Medium. Dr Colin Keay, physicist and astronomer
5.20 Closing remarks

Australian Science Festival

Canberra 16-24th August 2003

Interstate and local skeptics might like to bring their children (and all their classmates!) to Canberra for the Australian Science Festival which runs from 16-24th August. The 25 page program for the Festival may be accessed through the Skeptics Convention website link to the Australian Science Festival website at:

<http://sciencefestival.com.au/schools/schoolp.pdf>

Accommodation in Canberra could be at a premium so organise this early if coming to Canberra in August.

Canberra Skeptics are involved in organising certain activities for the Science Festival as detailed below. These may be booked through us using the Skeptics Convention Registration form or on 02 6296 4555 (preferably) or through the Science Festival Administration.

Conferences and talks

Australian Science Festival Young Skeptics Forum

Don't believe everything you hear, see or read. Topics such as UFOs, astrology, psychic surgery, magic, gurus, yowies, iridology and spontaneous human combustion will be dissected.

Date Friday, August 22 **Time** 1pm to 4pm. **Age suitability** — Years 5 to 12

Venue CSIRO Discovery Centre, Clunies Ross Street, Black Mountain

Bookings essential 02 6296 4555

Capacity up to 190 a session.

Cost \$4 general, \$2 for Double Helix members. **Duration** 3 hours

Workshops & Activities

Australian Science Festival Ride For The Planet.

If Canberra was tipped on its side its outer edge would be in space. Discover how thin our atmosphere really is by taking a bus or cycling past some markers that will bring this home.

Date Tuesday, August 19. **Time** 1pm to 4pm **Age suitability** — all ages

Venue to be advised

Bookings not required, for information ring 02 6296 4555

Cost free. **Duration** 3 hours.

Arts and Theatre

Young Skeptics Cartoon Competition Awards

Canberra Skeptics is organising a cartoon competition. The best original cartoons on topics such as UFOs, astrology, psychic surgery, magic, gurus, yowies, iridology and spontaneous human combustion will win prizes.

Age categories are under 10, under 13 and under 16.

Date Friday August 22 **Time** 4.15 pm **Age suitability** — Years 5 to 12

Venue CSIRO Discovery Centre, Clunies Ross Street, Black Mountain

Bookings recommended on 02 6296 4555.

Capacity upto 190 a session. **Cost** free. **Duration** 1 hour

High Schools program

Associated activity not organised by Canberra Skeptics: Myths, Monsters And Mysteries

Fascinated by tales of giant squid, crop circles, Loch Ness monsters, Tassie tigers, Bigfoot and the Bermuda Triangle? Join Tim the Yowie Man, the world's only practising cryptonaturalist, as he reveals the unusual science behind these and other mysteries.

Date Wednesday, August 20 to Friday, August 22. **Time** 9.45am. **Age suitability** — Years 3 to 6.

Venue Sutherland Theatrette

Bookings with Science Festival Administration.

Capacity 150 **Cost** \$3 **Duration** 45 mins.