



The Australian Skeptics Prize for Critical Thinking



The Australian Skeptics Prize for Critical Thinking, part of the Eureka Prizes from 1996 until 2005, is now a stand-alone Prize. It will be awarded for work that investigates conventional wisdom and beliefs which lack reliable evidence or scientific method, and that promotes rational thinking about such matters by the public, educators and the media.

For the past 10 years we have been gratified by the high standard of entries by winners and runners up. Prize recipients have included psychology students (for investigation into the genesis of superstitious beliefs, for an analysis of post-hypnotic suggestion, and for research into public perceptions of risk); a lecturer in the School of Policing Studies at Charles Sturt University (for the first empirical assessment of criminal profiling accuracy); a member of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Melbourne (for a critical analysis of critical thinking courses); a member of the Adelaide University Media Unit (for an article on how successful science communication is biased towards the sensational and fanciful); a Professor in the Department of Computer Sciences at ANU (for statistical research refuting claims of hidden coded messages in the Hebrew Bible), a teacher at Albany Hills State Primary School in Queensland for a science program that equips students to 'seek the evidence' for everyday assumptions; and a website that rates the accuracy of media medical stories.

The Prize of \$10,000 is to reward critical investigation of irrational paranormal beliefs or pseudo-scientific claims. Entries are welcomed from any interested Australian, whether involved professionally or by way of private enthusiasm. For example, eligible work includes the contribution of teachers at any level of education, who have devised programs that encourage critical thinking in students, beyond normal curriculum requirements. Similarly we welcome entries from journalists who have promoted critical thinking or exposed threats to it. The work can be in any media and can be one item, a series or an ongoing activity.

Members of Australian Skeptics state committees and their immediate families are ineligible to nominate.

Work submitted must have been undertaken/published/broadcast in Australia by an Australian citizen or permanent resident within the 5 years prior to the closing date for entries.

Entries will be judged according to originality, depth of critical thought and public benefit.

The judging panel may, at their discretion, award up to two extra prizes of \$2000 each to runner-up entries of particular merit.

The 2006 Skeptics Prize will be awarded at an awards dinner on Saturday, November 18, 2006 at the Australian Skeptics Annual Convention in Melbourne. Six copies of each entry, marked Skeptics Prize, must reach PO Box 268, Roseville NSW 2069 no later than COB October 6, 2006.