

# The Australian Skeptics Prize for Critical Thinking

The 2007 Australian Skeptics Prize for Critical Thinking will be awarded for work that investigates popular 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. Our Prize is aimed to attract entries from educators across the broad spectrum, journalists or others in the media, and academic or private researchers.

Our inaugural Prize in 2006 attracted a high standard of entries from a wide variety of fields. The winner of the \$10,000 Critical Thinking Prize was Dr Martin Bridgstock from the School of Science, Griffith University, who instituted a course, Skepticism, Science and the Paranormal, as an elective for second year students. His course, which encouraged a skeptical approach to many common beliefs, has consistently attracted an increasing enrolment each year since 2003.

We also awarded a runner-up Prize of \$2,000 to Ms Kylie Sturgess, an English teacher at MLC, Perth, for her initiative in devising a course to encourage students to investigate popular beliefs using skeptical principles.

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.

## *Rules for Entry*

- ◇ 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. They may be accompanied by supporting comments from others expert in their field.
- ◇ The judging panel may, at their discretion, award up to two extra prizes of \$2000 each to runner-up entries of particular merit.
- ◇ The 2007 Australian Skeptics Prize for Critical Thinking will be presented at an awards dinner on Saturday, November 17, 2007 at the Australian Skeptics Annual Convention in Hobart.
- ◇ Six copies of each entry, complete with all documentation, marked Skeptics Prize, must reach PO Box 268, Roseville NSW 2069 no later than COB October 15, 2007.