



## The Skeptics SA guide to Creation 'science'

**The Australian Skeptics' opposition** to Creation 'science' is not anti-religious. We see Creation 'science' as an attack on science and on science education.

There are many fundamentalist groups which believe in various forms of the divine creation. The most prominent and vocal group in Australia is the Queensland based Answers in Genesis (AiG), which prior to November 10 1997, were known as the Creation Science Foundation (CSF). This is a nondenominational group of Christian fundamentalists who promote the belief in divine creation of the world and a literal interpretation of the Bible, which would place creation at around 4000 BCE.

The AiG believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, and that God has given his assurance that the Bible is historically and scientifically correct. They view the theory of evolution as an attack on the Bible, the foundation of their beliefs.

The AiG publish a quarterly magazine and many books and pamphlets to promote their ideas. This material is aimed at the lay person and may seem convincing, although in reality, it is misleading and inaccurate.

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The beliefs of the AiG include that:

- The Earth is less than ten thousand years old
- The world was created in six twenty-four-hour days complete with all the current life forms
- The great flood of Genesis covered the whole of the Earth and that all present day land animals are descended from those that were carried on 'Noah's Ark'

There is no genuine scientific evidence to support these beliefs. The evidence that is usually put forward by the AiG does not stand up to the most basic of scientific investigations. To biologists, the evidence supporting evolution is quite overwhelming. The evidence from palaeontology, physiology, genetics, biochemistry, and from other fields of science all support a coherent scientific view of the origin of our planet and the life upon it. This view is in direct conflict with the teachings of creation 'scientists'.

Certainly scientists are debating some of the details and the nature of evolutionary change, but scientists do not doubt that the present web of life on Earth is the result of evolution. The AiG portray the scientific debate as a fundamental disagreement between scientists on

the subject and a reason, in itself, why evolution is wrong.

Geologists are equally certain that the Earth is thousands of millions of years old. The evidence from rock strata, radioactive dating, cooling rates, salt concentrations in the seas, plate tectonics, and the fossil record clearly point to an ancient Earth.

The cosmological time scale, established independently from the earth sciences, also confirm the ancient nature of the cosmos and of the Earth. The Earth is 4.6 billion years old at the current best estimate. There are many books that are written for the lay reader that explain how the age of the Earth is calculated and how we are beginning to understand our origins at last. (For an excellent introduction to this, see Isaac Asimov's *Beginnings*, Berkley Books, 1987).

The Australian Skeptics are concerned that the propaganda of the AiG is directed at young people, where their warped version of the evidence may be taken as fact by impressionable and uncritical minds. The AiG promulgate their views by misquoting science, by using results out of context, and by selective reporting of data which appears to support their case. They systematically misinterpret information

so as to support their preconceived beliefs, which is contrary to the scientific method.

The Australian Academy of Science issued a two page document on creationism in 1986. They state that “The creationist account of the origin of life is not appropriate to a course in the science of biology, and the claim that it is a viable scientific explanation of the diversity of life does not warrant support”. The claim of the AiG that there is scientific evidence to support the Genesis version of creation is intellectually and morally dishonest and the fact that the people in this group avoid proper scientific debate is truly reprehensible.

The Australian Skeptics still offer their challenge for a proper scientific debate with the AiG, but our offer has never been accepted. It seems they would rather avoid us than be exposed as the scientific imposters that they are.

We would urge anyone trying to decide for themselves where the truth lies in this debate to investigate the issue for themselves: examine the evidence and arguments put forward by science, and compare that to the hollow reasoning of the creationists. Decide using reason, and not dogma.

For further reading we strongly recommend Ian Plimer’s *Telling Lies for God*, Random House Australia, 1994.

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## **Skeptics SA**

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