

Dear Ian:

I am writing to you to express my greatest concerns about an article published in 'Chemistry in Australia' in the recent April issue called 'A creationists view of the intelligent design debate'.

I am the past-chair of the RACI Polymer Division and have worked hard for the RACI. I must frankly say that I was shocked to see that the RACI allows a creationist to air their voice in our 'Chemistry in Australia' RACI magazine. While other learned and scientific societies are actively distancing themselves (including the National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Science Teachers' Association, the American Geophysical Union, the American Chemical Society, and the American Association of Physics Teachers to name but a few) from such scientific none-sense, the RACI is happy to have such views printed in their magazine. For example, I quote directly from the American Chemical Society's Board policy statement on the teaching of evolution: "The inclusion of non-scientific explanations in science curricula misrepresents the nature and processes of science and compromises a central purpose of public education - the preparation of a scientifically literate workforce."

I will not go any way into refuting even the most untenable (and made up) arguments put forward in this feature article, as this has been done by other authors and the most eminent biologists in the world on multiple occasions before.

What most concerns me is the fact that the RACI as a scientific organization even considers - seemingly in the name of equal opportunity and equality as I was advised by the editor - to print opinion pieces under the banner of science that are on the level of fairy tales and make belief at the best. By allowing religious fundamentalists a platform in our magazine, the RACI undermines scientific reasoning and discounts scientific evidence. The intelligent design (i.e. creationism) vs evolution debate is NOT about two scientific theories competing based on scientific evidence, but rather a matter of a made-up philosophical picture of the world based on the literal taking of a 2000 year old inconsistent and clearly non-scientific world view (i.e. the bible) against sound modern scientific investigations based on experimental evidence.

If it is truly the policy of the RACI - as I was advised by the editor - to allow members to have a say in printed form on almost anything they wish, be it the most fundamentalist and non-scientific topics such as 'creationism' - I fear greatly for the reputation of our society. This feature article - although it may not represent the official position of the RACI, which I most sincerely hope - has already done damage to the

cause of exact science. Colleagues, PhD students and post-doctoral fellows at UNSW I have been in contact since this article appeared were plainly shocked.

While a magazine like 'Chemistry in Australia' should and must print articles that argue strongly against scientific non-sense such as 'creationism' and 'intelligent design'. However, 'Chemistry in Australia' is strongly hurting and insulting the scientific method its members apply everyday in hard work in their laboratories by giving creationists a platform to spill their politically motivated writings.

I urge you to reconsider this policy of allowing religious fundamentalists a voice in reply to previous printings based on scientific method as otherwise we open the door for fairy tales to permeate the scientific method. By printing this article the RACI has endorsed that the creationist view is worthy of scientific discussion - this is a complete disgrace and flies in the face of all sincere scientists regardless of their personal philosophical beliefs.

Please consider this e-mail a letter to the editor of 'Chemistry in Australia'.

Best wishes and kind regards
Christopher Barner-Kowollik
/Past-Chair of the RACI Polymer Division/