



Fair Game: The Incredible Untold Story of Scientology in Australia

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As astonishing as it is compelling - Steve Cannane's extraordinary insight into Scientology in Australia is investigative journalism at its very best.

From Rugby League players trying to improve their game, to Hollywood superstars and the depressed sons of media moguls, Scientology has recruited its share of famous Australians. Less known is that Australia was the first place to ban Scientology, or that Scientology spies helped expose the Chelmsford Deep Sleep Scandal. Numerous Australians have held senior posts in the organisation only to fall foul of the top brass and lose their families as a result.

Based on years of interviews and research, Walkley Award-winning journalist Steve Cannane tells for the first time the fascinating story of Australia's vital involvement with this powerful, secretive and punitive cult.

Fair Game: The Incredible Untold Story of Scientology in Australia Details

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Janet says

EXCELLENT!

Steve Cannane has done a remarkable job presenting new firsthand experiences and fascinating accounts of former members and a look at a lot of pieces of Scientology history as well. I highly recommend this book.

Emma McPherson says

Despite having heard a great deal about Scientology in bits and pieces over the years, this book was still full of revelations. Tracking Australia's role in the development of the Church of Scientology was an intriguing approach on Steve Cannane's part. Australia and Australians have seemingly played a role in many of the key events in the organisation's history. In fact, you could say Australia has been involved since the beginning; a crucial participant in L. Ron Hubbard's personal myth-making.

One of my favourite things about this book is that you get the full history of the birth of Scientology with plentiful insights into LRH's life and character. After learning more about him, it feels like all the strange goings-on make some kind of sense.

Fair Game was fascinating, well-written, and full of the kinds of details that keep me hooked. I highly recommend it and have actually already lent my copy to a friend - I live in a town with no bookshops, we have to share.

Librariasaurus says

Fair Game was a really informative book and it's set off a chain reaction of interest in the subject of Scientology.

I listened to the audiobook edition that was read by the author and I felt that the narration by the author was quite good and added a level of depth to the writing that would not have been achieved had someone else narrated. I have seen comments from other reviewers relating to the audio narration being a little monotonous and I can definitely see where those comments originate, but my issue with the narration was the odd emphasis Cannane places on pieces of dialogue, they get oddly animated for a non-fiction book and it got a little annoying by the end of the book.

If you want a basic explanation of the history of Scientology in Australia, this is a really good place to start. It's not super in depth, but it gives good overall coverage of the movement between about 1950 and 2016 as well as its impact on Australian spirituality, the Australian population, Australian government and lawmaking, Australian media and prominent Australians both in Australia and abroad. The downside of this being a more general book is that it almost felt like Cannane ran out of facts to use as he repeated a whole lot of content multiple times. Facts mentioned at the beginning of the book were repeated in the final chapters

and on occasion facts from the beginning of a chapter were repeated at the end of a chapter. It was a noticeable flaw.

The thing that made this stand apart from the majority of other Scientology research books is the Australian aspect of it. It is a mostly complete history of Scientology from its beginnings here and it provides researched and referenced evidence of the complete lack of religious aspects to Scientology as a whole. I am a firm subscriber to the school of thought that this is NOT, in any form a religion. Scientology had a rocky start here, eventually leading to a world first ban on Scientology in its original incarnation, and as at the 2011 census had slightly over 2000 members in Australia, much lower than their claim of 150,000 members, Cannane discusses this in more detail in the book.

I believe my three star rating is reasonably fair, I wasn't totally blown away by this book, it didn't bring me much of anything I didn't already know about Scientology but it has awakened a need for more knowledge on the topic, I'll be continuing my reading with titles like Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief, Beyond Belief: My Secret Life Inside Scientology and My Harrowing Escape, Ruthless: Scientology, My Son David Miscavige, and Me and Let's sell these people A Piece of Blue Sky as well as Leah Remini's biography Troublemaker: Surviving Hollywood and Scientology.

There was one thought travelling through my mind the whole time I was reading this though. Surely people can't truly believe all this rubbish? Why are they putting up with what amounts to torture and imprisonment? Why are they giving their entire lives, everything they own and all of their money to a maniacal figurehead? As a person who is opposed to all forms of religion but believes firmly that people can live their lives however they choose; I cannot conceive of how people can do this, but understand that some people will for reasons known only to them. I was particularly struck by the undocumented, or more accurately, the off the record interview with L Ron Hubbard where he says quite candidly, that he cannot believe that so many people, including his own wife, fell for his plot to make money, that anyone could believe any of this stuff that he was preaching. He also was quoted at one stage as saying that the quickest way to make money is to start a religion. He has mentioned in the past as well that Scientology was not a religion.

What I took from this book was a lot of contradiction. From all angles. Scientology is an area of modern spirituality that is shady, secretive, combative and driven by power, greed and money. But isn't that what Catholicism and Christianity are guilty of as well? Scientology is a modern 'religion' and while the ancient religions boast the crusades and the crucifixion etc, it just seems that with Scientology, the blood on their hands is entirely more visible.

Frances says

This was a real eye opener and a really compelling read. Good job Steve

Greg says

My favourite story about PT Barnum is how he used to have a sign up at his circus stating 'This Way to the Egress' which patrons used to take believing that they were about to see another animal, only to find out, after leaving the tent, they'd have to pay to get back in again. I'm only familiar with author, Steve Cannane, through his occasional talking head appearances on the ABC but thought this book was well written and

extensively researched. The only reason he didn't get 5 stars is because I don't think he adequately explained why seemingly highly intelligent people could be duped in such a fashion (although in fairness to Cannane, it probably wasn't through lack of trying to present a more balanced approach). Well worth a read though.

Robert Rojo says

I found this to have a very interesting insight into the unknown areas of Scientology. Would I call it a religion?, not from the accounts in this book. Love the referencing and the accounts of individuals from the book. The only negative that I could say it can become quite cumbersome with political activity, but this could be that I'm just into that side of things. A great read.

Kathleen says

While I have read a lot of Scientology books, I find it hard to figure there's going to be anything new in ones I haven't read. I was pleased to find new stuff in this book. And more corroboration of the stuff I already knew.

Carla says

Well researched and well written, full of personal accounts from ex-Scientologists. I liked that this book centres on Scientology's history in Australia rather than just America.

Linda says

Compelling and well-researched - a thrilling read, and a chilling one as well.

Suzie says

Fascinating compilation of the workings of the Scientology organization and the abuses within. This book is well-researched and well-presented, with a lot of Australian connections; the chapter on Chelmsford was particularly interesting

Melinda Crumblin says

Riveting, fascinating and horrifying!!

A lot of people should be in jail for a hell of a lot of illegal and immoral stuff done to a lot of people. In the name of making money and having your name live on..

Winsome says

Fascinating insights into Scientology in Australia, especially the connection to Chelmsford.

B.P. says

Like reading a really long New Weekly, except with references* & well-researched. Even if half of this book was true- which I'm sure it is - we should be very wary of Scientology. I am astounded that Scientology is classed as a religion in Australia and therefore tax exempt. From reading this book and watching documentaries, Scientology seems like a business to me- one that is based on scamming people & in some cases depriving people of basic human rights.

(*some seem to be hearsay.)

Elianastar says

If you are going to read any books on Scientology, *don't* miss this one. Most of the books out there are from an American perspective. But some of the worst "policies" instituted by L.Ron Hubbard were birthed out of the battles waged in Australia & that is the perspective of this author... who was right in the middle of some of it.

Here you will find the origins of the Sea Org, "fair game" policy & several other experiential "norms" of the Sea Org. What I found of greatest interest was the biographical material about LRH. Anyone who takes the time to research this man could never be sucked into his organization. (I refuse to call it a "church"... more so after reading this book than even before!) Scientology is basically a biography of LRH & his struggles with his own demons. Never presented so clearly for me than in these pages.

I would even go so far as to suggest if you were going to read only one book about Scientology, this would be the one I'd recommend. I have read several others & have a number of others on my reading list so it is possible I may find another that is as good. But L Ron Hubbard had declared that Australia would be the first continent to "go clear" & his focus on achieving that goal so intensely set the stage for it's ruin.

The book covers the history from it's pre-inception of Dianetics to the time Mike Rinder left and the "Going Clear" project. Each chapter focuses on a particular point in time or a particular person, which creates a bit of overlap in story line. It is quite thorough & I didn't find the overlapping material in some chapters distracting at all. I'm not certain how one could follow all the threads & storylines in a cleaner way & still tell all the stories well.

Elizabeth says

Has a friend ever loaned you a book which you wouldn't have picked up for yourself and it ended up being super fascinating? I have zero interest in Scientology so I never would have looked twice at this book so I'm

grateful a friend thrust it into my hands. Steve Cannane's book is minutely researched, fascinating, horrifying, mystifying, laughably ridiculous and interwoven with deeply human really disturbing stories of life in this for-profit cult. Really glad I read it.
