R
cember economist Rory Robertson who
bet Doomsday forecaster Steve Keen a
walk to Mt Kosciusko over house prices
not crashing during the GFC.
Well he’s at it again and this time he’s taking on
University of Sydney nutritionists Jennie Brand-
Miller and Alan Barclay over their study findings
suggesting there is “an inverse relationship
between sugar consumption and obesity.
The Australian Paradox study by Professor
Brand-Miller, author of The Low GI Diet book,
and Dr Barclay, the Australian Diabetes Council’s
head of research, claimed that Australia’s sugar
consumption had fallen by 23 per cent over the past
three decades while obesity has soared.
While this may come as a happy surprise to
some, Robertson is not so joyous. He says
the “shonky sugar study”, is a combination of
unreliable facts and misinterpretation of statistics
and data which have led the nutritionists to
publishing, what he says is a “flawed” paper.
The nutritionists have been locked in a heated
debate with the economist. But in a bid to end the
fight, Robertson said he would give $40,000 to
anyone who is able to dispute his claims. On his
website, he has described The Australian Paradox,
published in the e-journal Nutrients, as “sloppy data
analysis”. Apart from misinterpreting that statistics,
Robertson accuses the pair of using UN Food and
Agriculture Organisation statistics taken from
information from an Australian Bureau of Statistics
survey that had been discontinued several years ago.
Robertson is arguing for “the papers correction
or retraction by its author, the journal and or the
University of Sydney”. However, his requests don’t
seem to be so straightforward, as Brand-Miller and
Barclay blame Robertson for factual errors and
“misinterpretation of the distinctions between total
sugars versus refined sugars, sugar availability versus
apparent consumption, sugar-sweetened and diet soft
drinks, and other nutrition information.”
They say he incorrectly equates sugar availability
with sugar consumption. In the Australia Paradox
Revisited paper the pair say sugar availability is
not the same as consumption as it doesn’t take into
account food wastage, use in animal food, beer and
alcohol fermentation and in non-food industrial use.
The academics substantiate their original paper saying
it is supported by three independent sources. There is
no word yet on anyone winning the money.

A look at the shark social whirl

The networking behaviour of sharks is
being examined to discover the mysteries
of their society. Lead researcher Nathan
Bass is conducting the study as part of
his honours project, in conjunction with
Taronga Zoo to determine why and when
the large marine predators congregate.
"In this day and age where the mere
mention of the word ‘shark’ evokes a
whole range of preconceived ideas, it’s
humbling to acknowledge that much of
the underwater world is still a mystery.”

Despite various anecdotal reports, little
scientific research has been conducted on
shark social behaviour.
This project is focused on Port Jackson
sharks and involves researchers, using
scuba equipment, to identify which
sharks are interacting. Divers will also
record and track the animals’ interactions
and movements with acoustic devices,
which will be set up to acoustic listening
stations at the Jervis Bay Marine Park.
Bass said that Port Jackson sharks
are social while resting, frequently with
more than 30 individual sharks recorded
together in one area.
Taronga Zoo researcher Dr Jo
Wiszniewski said that most people think
that sharks are a solitary species. “Many
shark species have shown us that their
social networks are much more complex.”
Bass said they hope to find out whether
Port Jackson sharks frequently congregate
with the same individuals for social
reasons, and if they are, whether they
prefer to socialise with individuals of
the same sex and size or rather with
individuals they are related to.

The great sugar debate

South West Institute of TAFE is a leading provider of quality regional education and
training services with an outstanding reputation for innovation. Winner of the 2011
Victorian Large Training Provider of the Year Award, the Institute operates 5
campuses servicing South West Victoria delivering courses and programs to over
12,000 Students per annum.

The current CEO is to retire creating an exceptional opportunity for someone with
the vision, capability and passion to lead the important independent regional TAFE
Institute. The South West Institute of TAFE is well placed to manage the transition
to the new funding model through this programme will require hard work,
persistence, strong HR skills and resilience from the new CEO.
In addition to overall responsibility for the management and leadership of the
Institute, the CEO will:
• Implement the Institute’s Transition Plan including building upon collaborative
  partnership programmes that emerge during the transition process;
• Advise the Institute Board on strategic planning and policy matters;
• Drive continued growth in commercial activities and sustain the Institute’s
  important role in supporting regional development;
• Maintain strong relationships with key industry and other education providers,
  government agencies and the broader community;
• Oversees the exciting planned infrastructure developments across the Institute.

The successful candidate will demonstrate: highly developed and proven
leadership and strategic management skills within a complex, fluid and challenging
environment; a track record of achieving contractual and performance targets; the
successful management of financial, human and facility resources; and a record of
achievement in leading and participating in relevant community and industry
forums. A proven record of management success in the vocational education
sector is essential.

This is a high profile role within the regional community that will suit someone who can
exhibit strong business and educational leadership. Applications close on
Monday 3rd September.
Enquire in strictest confidence to (03) 9629 6333 or apply via