

**Rory Robertson**  
**April 2016**

**University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor and Chairman of Group of Eight, Dr Michael Spence, embraces academic freedom, ditches promise of “excellence in research” and long tradition of correcting harmful false info in public debate, happily ignoring harm caused to public health**

## **LETTER 1**

***Letter re harmful misconduct at USyd Charles Perkins Centre + Go8 defrauding taxpayers***

On 20 Apr 2016, at 7:12 AM, rory robertson <[strathburnstation@gmail.com](mailto:strathburnstation@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good morning, afternoon, evening,

Please find my letter to the **Senior Executive Group of the University of Sydney and outside observers** in the following link: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Harmful-misconduct-Charles-Perkins-Centre.pdf>

My letter presents the relevant recent history - including the botched *Initial Inquiry Report* and last week's ABC TV *Lateline* exposé: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4442720.htm> - before making a **four-point argument for the formal retraction of the Charles Perkins Centre's infamous *Australian Paradox* paper.**

Please feel free to forward this email to others who may be able to help fix the problems I have identified.

**Regards,**  
**Rory**

## **LETTER 2**

***Re: Letter re harmful misconduct at USyd Charles Perkins Centre + Go8 defrauding taxpayers***

On Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 7:49 AM, Michael Spence <[michael.spence@sydney.edu.au](mailto:michael.spence@sydney.edu.au)> wrote:

**Dear Mr Robertson**

An independent enquiry has found there to have been no academic misconduct in the publication of this research justifying any type of disciplinary action or requiring the retraction of this paper.

Universities are not advocacy organisations. They do not promote particular points of view. They are fora for research and debate and must, absent independently established research misconduct or some type of unlawfulness, protect the right of their academic staff to undertake and publish research. This includes research that you may believe to be wrong in its conclusions. Indeed, the whole progress of scientific understanding depends upon the constant correction and re-correction of published research. For a university to require the retraction of a piece of research simply on the basis that someone believes it to be wrong, even patently wrong, would be a fundamental blow to the tradition of free enquiry that has made universities such powerful engines of innovation and of social development over many centuries. I repeat, we will not censor or require the retraction of the the academic work of our staff on any grounds save independently verified research misconduct or unlawfulness.

Your campaign of public vilification will not change this position.

Yours sincerely

**Michael Spence**  
Sent from my iPhone

## LETTER 3

### ***USyd VC replies: Academic freedom trumps Go8 promises of "excellence", harm to public health***

From: rory robertson <strathburnstation@gmail.com, on Thu, Apr 21, 2016 at 8:50 AM

To: Michael Spence <michael.spence@sydney.edu.au>

**Dear Dr Spence,**

I was surprised to receive your reply highlighting the importance of academic freedom, while choosing not to address the detail of the research incompetence and harm to public health that I have documented.

To be frank, I think you are making a big mistake. The time for pretending is over.

#### **1. WHY PRETEND THE FAO'S CONSPICUOUSLY FLAT FAKE LINE DOES NOT EXIST?**

Dr Spence, what is your policy on the use of fake data in Go8 "peer reviewed" papers?

Is the use of fake data consistent with the Go8's promises of "excellence in research"?

<https://go8.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/role-importanceofresearchunis.pdf>

The Charles Perkins Centre scientists are happy for their *Australian Paradox* paper to feature fake data in the form of a conspicuous flat line, **but now the University of Sydney appears to want to pretend it does not exist.**

**Take your Initial Inquiry Report. It's a shocker.** The University of Sydney's quality-control cop, Professor Jill Trehwella, and her hand-picked independent investigator, Professor Robert Clark AO, simply "buried" my clear and detailed evidence that the *Australian Paradox* paper features fake data - including a conspicuously fake flat line - in the 1999-2003 period.

**[charts overleaf]**

Here's how they did it: "Statements made by the Complainant [me] alleging that the United Nations FAO has falsified data are serious, and do not appear to be based on detailed evidence or inquiry": p. 21

<http://sydney.edu.au/research/documents/australian-paradox-report-redacted.pdf>

Dr Spence, readers, did you see that? They simply "disappeared" my evidence!

QUALITY-CONTROL COPS APPEAR TO PRETEND MY DETAILED EVIDENCE NOT PROVIDED

WOW! GONE! AMAZING! IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!

YET CONSPICUOUSLY FLAT LINE STILL SELF-EVIDENTLY IS FAKE **[charts overleaf]**

In case you missed it, here's an action replay: "Statements made by the Complainant [me] alleging that the United Nations FAO has falsified data are serious, and do not appear to be based on detailed evidence or inquiry" (p. 21).

Dr Spence, readers, please look at Figures 6 and 7 in my letter yesterday **[or charts overleaf]**, documenting the falsified data: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Harmful-misconduct-Charles-Perkins-Centre.pdf>

In more detail, here is **my 2012 "exchange of letters" with the FAO** that I provided to both Professor Jill Trehwella and Professor Robert Clark AO: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>

Yes, the fake-data situation is **exactly as I claimed in the ABC's *Lateline* and *Background Briefing* reports:**

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4442720.htm> ;

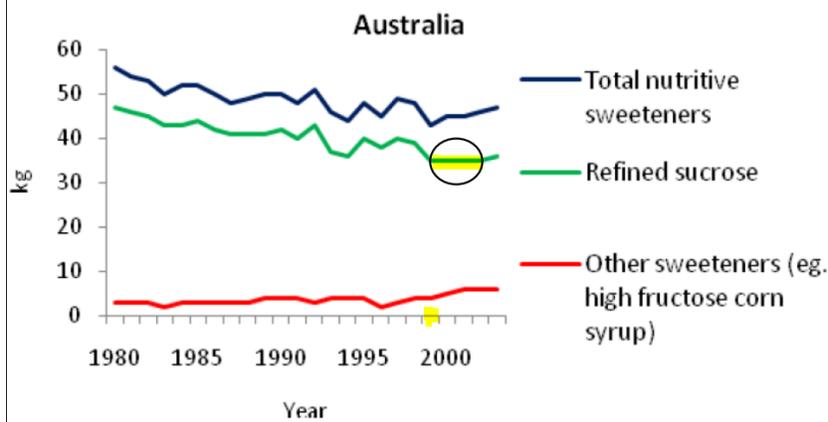
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/2014-02-09/5239418>

And the fake-data situation is **exactly as I explained to Professor Robert Clark AO on page 4 of my formal Submission to the Initial Inquiry**; indeed, the "detailed evidence" Professor Clark claims he and Professor Jill Trehwella were not provided continues to **hide in plain sight** on page 4 of <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/RRsubmission2inquiry.pdf>

**[Letter 3 continues on page 8]**

## KEY CHARTS: Data discontinued as unreliable by ABS after 1998-99, then faked by FAO to 2003

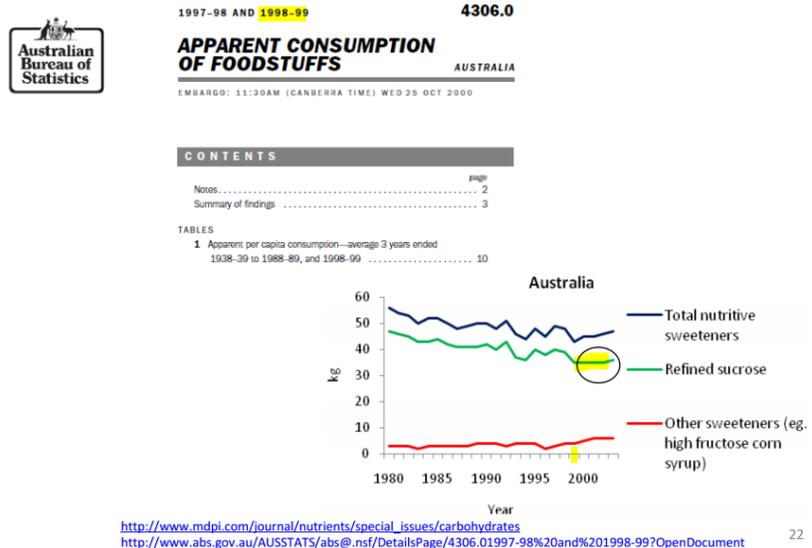
Awkwardly, authors' sucrose – green – series "exists" in 2003 despite underlying dataset discontinued as unreliable by ABS after 1998-99!??



[http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special\\_issues/carbohydrates](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special_issues/carbohydrates)  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4306.01997-98%20and%201998-99?OpenDocument>

21

How come professional scientists were unaware - or deliberately didn't say - that key series discontinued by ABS after 1998-99?!!



[http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special\\_issues/carbohydrates](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special_issues/carbohydrates)  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4306.01997-98%20and%201998-99?OpenDocument>

22

<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf>

## FAO confirms that it invented conspicuous dead-end flat line, based on nothing real

From: **MorenoGarcia, Gladys (ESS)** <[Gladys.MorenoGarcia@fao.org](mailto:Gladys.MorenoGarcia@fao.org)>  
 Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2012 at 9:43 PM  
 Subject: FW: quick question on basic Australian sugar data  
 To: "strathburnstation@gmail.com" <[strathburnstation@gmail.com](mailto:strathburnstation@gmail.com)>  
 Cc: "Rummukainen, Kari (ESS)" <[Kari.Rummukainen@fao.org](mailto:Kari.Rummukainen@fao.org)>

Dear Rory

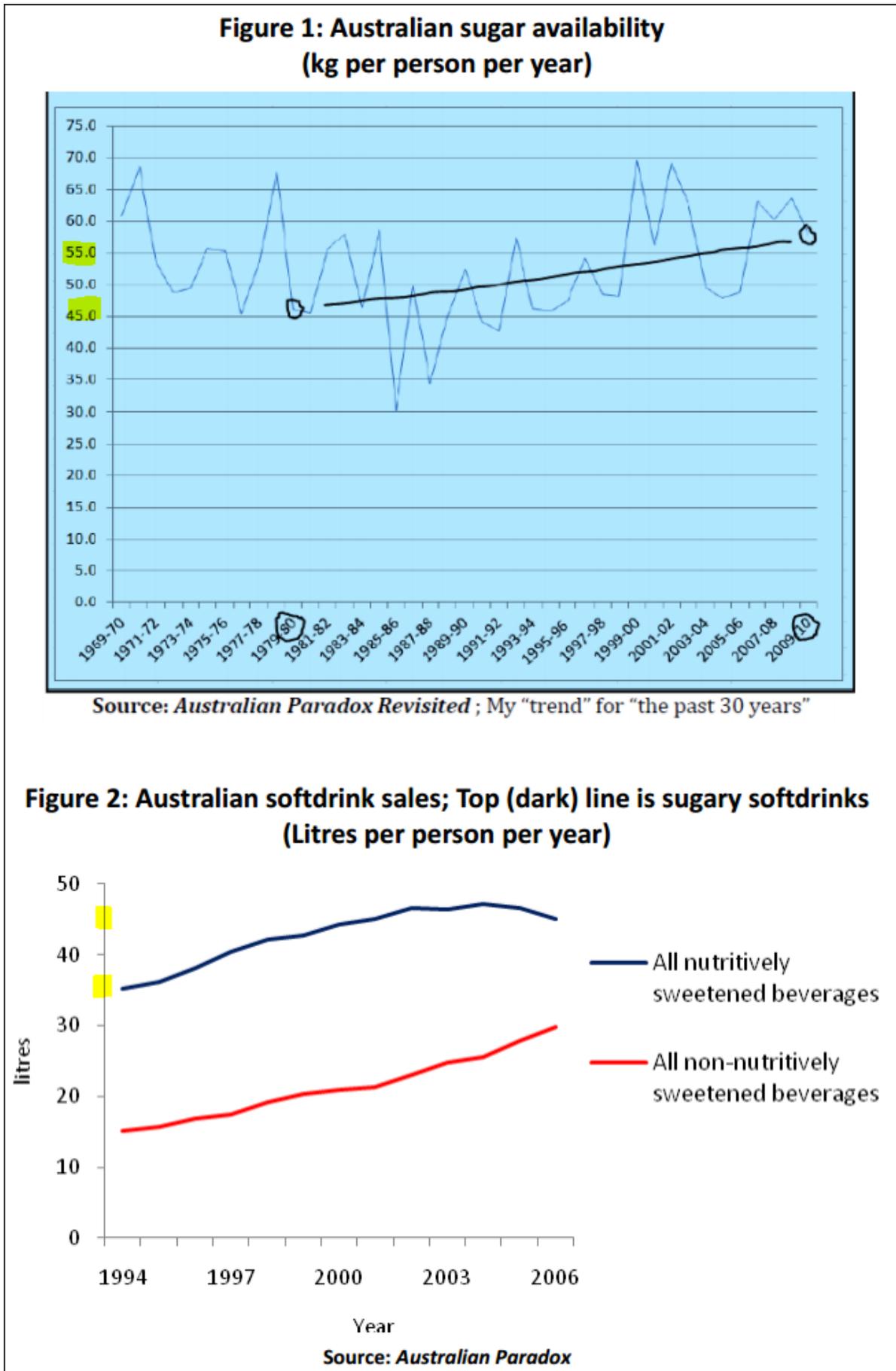
The "apparent consumption" or better 'food availability' can be found under Faostat Food Supply or Food Balance Sheet domains up to year 2007.  
 Food supply  
<http://faostat.fao.org/site/345/default.aspx>  
 Food balance sheet  
<http://faostat.fao.org/site/354/default.aspx>

In the case of Australia I have looked at the time series and there is some food of Sugar & syrups nes and Sugar confectionary the biggest amounts are under Refined Sugar where data is with symbol \* but it is calculated with following note:  
 'calc.on 37 kg.per cap. as per last available off. year level (1999)  
 The figure for 1999 and for earlier years come from; ABS - APP. CONS. OF FOODSTUFFS.

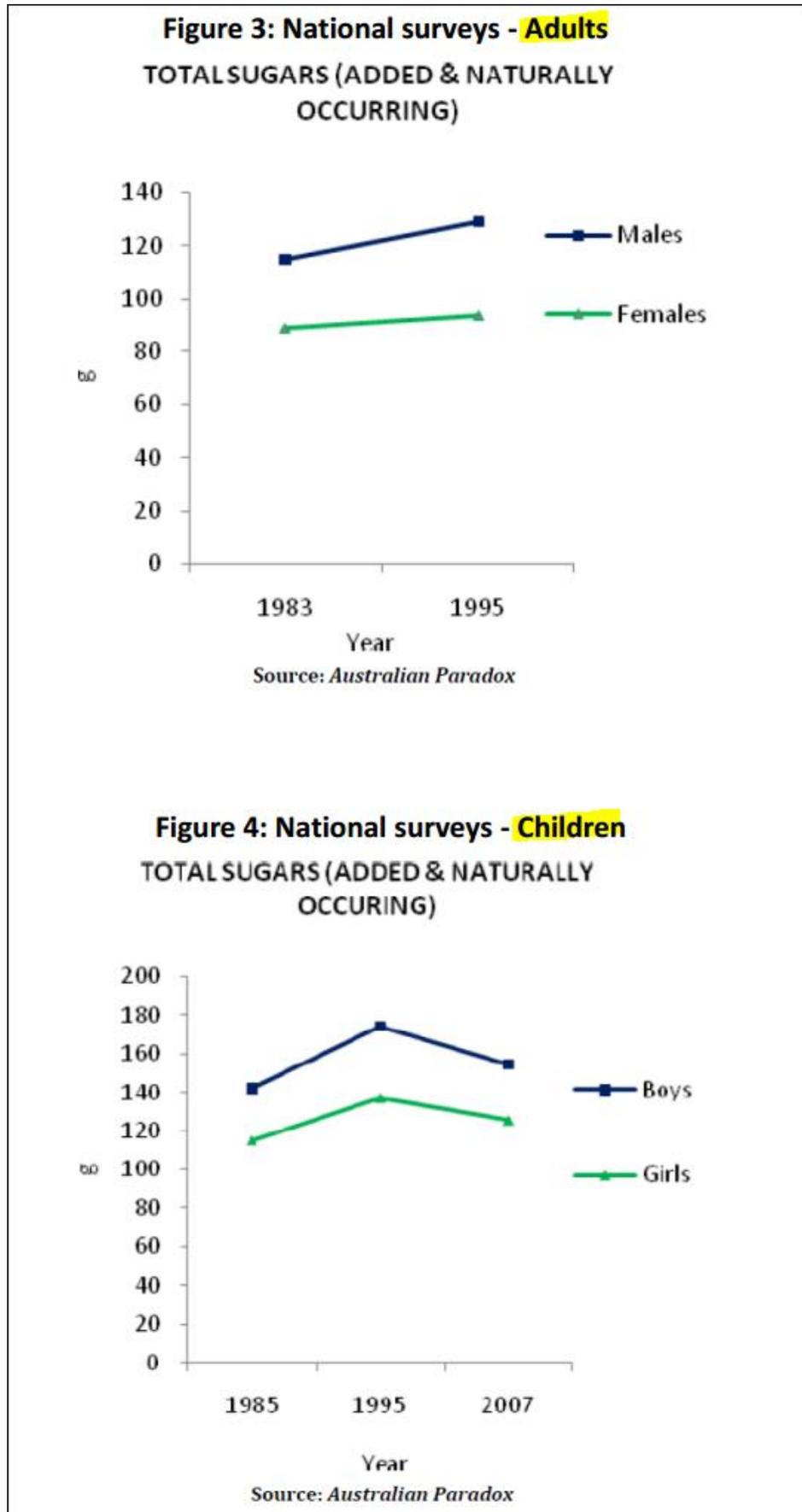
Regards  
 Gladys C. Moreno G.  
 Statistician  
 C-428  
 Statistics Division  
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Letter 4 in <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>

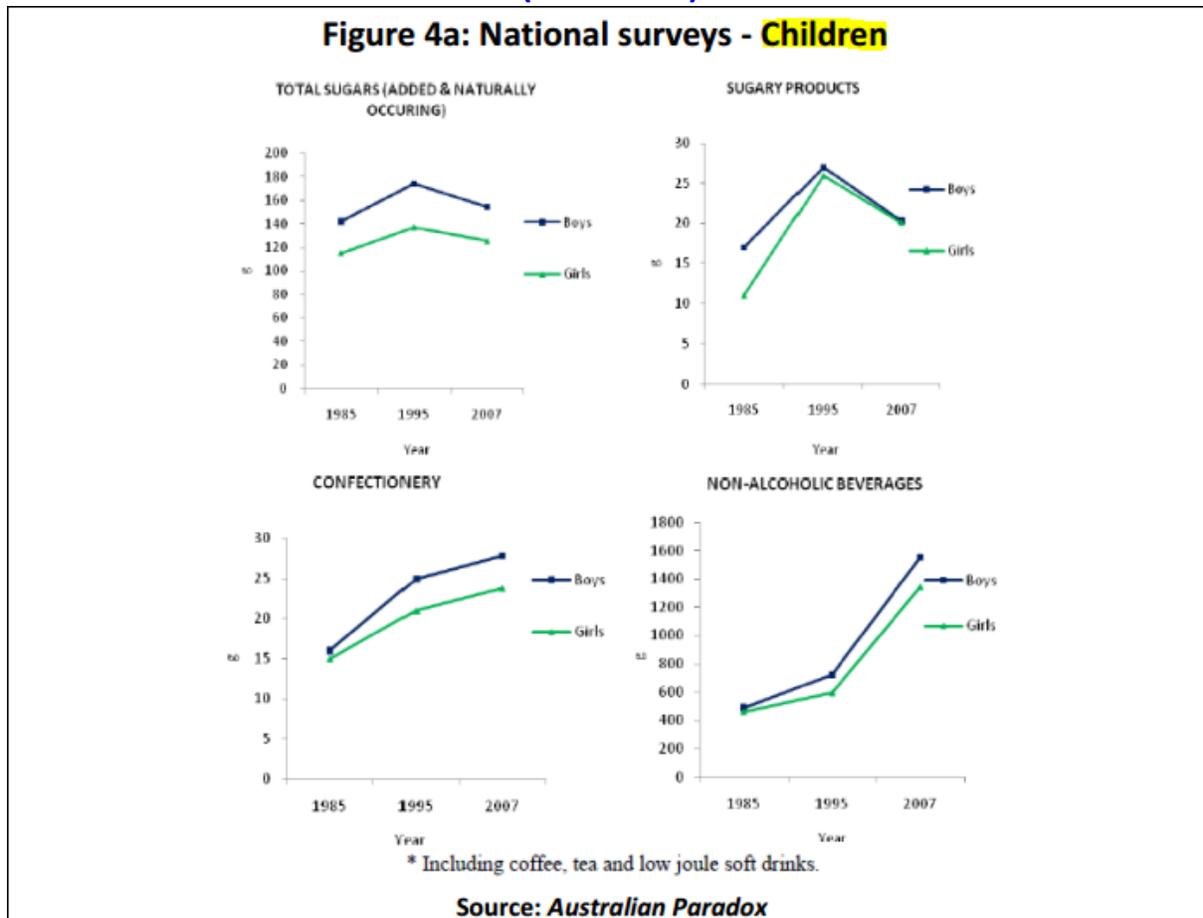
Charles Perkins Centre's graphic evidence of "consistent and substantial decline", 1980-2010



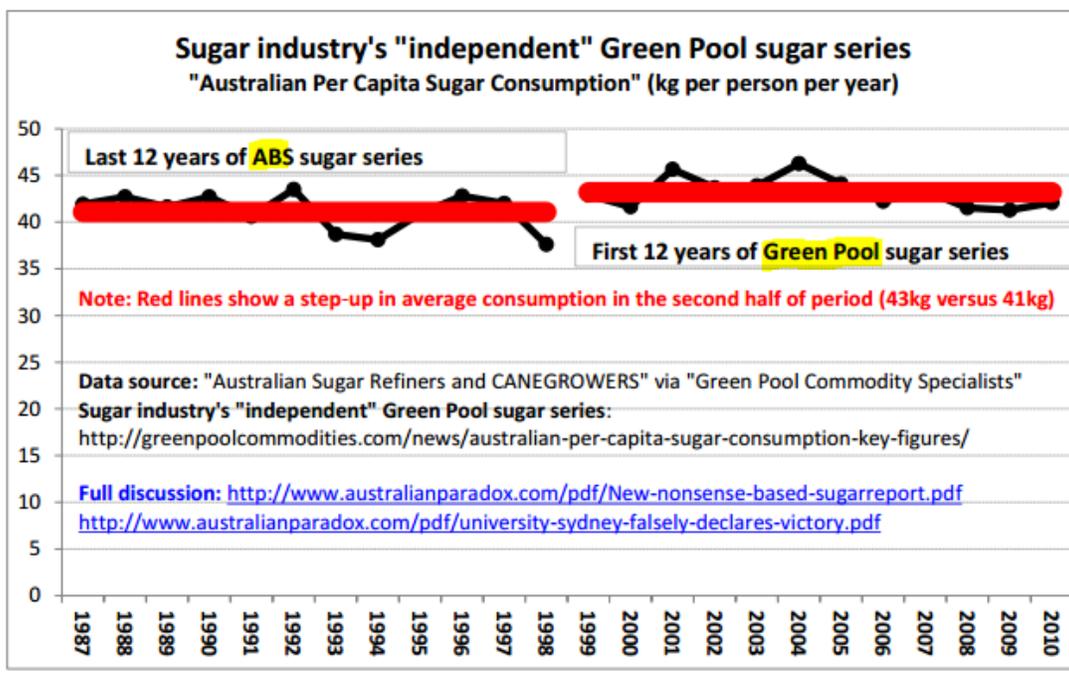
Charles Perkins Centre's graphic evidence of "consistent and substantial decline", 1980-2010  
(continued)



Charles Perkins Centre's graphic evidence of "consistent and substantial decline", 1980-2010  
(continued)



**Figure 5: Australian sugar industry's measure of sugar consumption**



<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/New-nonsense-based-sugarreport.pdf> ;

<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

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## Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion says sugary soft drinks 'killing the population' in remote communities

By political reporter Anna Henderson  
Posted 12 Feb 2016, 2:07pm

**In the wake of this week's progress report on Closing the Gap, the Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has declared sugary soft drinks are "killing the population" in remote Indigenous communities.**

According to evidence provided to Senate estimates today, at least 1.1 million litres of so-called "full sugar" soft drink was sold in remote community stores last financial year.

"I think particularly in remote communities and very remote communities sugar is just killing the population," Senator Scullion said.



**PHOTO:** The Closing the Gap report said the worst health outcomes, in terms of diabetes, heart disease and other chronic illnesses were found in remote communities.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-12/scullion-says-sugar-is-killing-remote-communities/7162974>



The University of Sydney's Jennie Brand-Miller and Bill Shrapnel with a variety of foods, some more nutritious than others, that all contain sugar. Picture: Jane Dempster Source: The Australian

**BILL Shrapnel was not amused. He'd logged on to the National Health and Medical Research Council's website a few weeks ago and read the draft dietary guideline recommendations.**

"My reaction was that the NHMRC is supposed to be the bastion of evidence-based nutrition," recalls Shrapnel, consultant dietitian and deputy chairman of the **University of Sydney Nutrition Research Foundation**. "But their dietary work is still laced with the dogma that diminishes our profession."

What raised Shrapnel's ire was the word sugars in recommendation No 3: "Limit intake of foods and drinks containing saturated and trans fats; added salt; added sugars; and alcohol". **Limit sugars? "Show us the evidence," he says. "There isn't any."**

**"It doesn't actually do any direct harm to the human body.** It doesn't raise blood cholesterol or raise blood pressure or cause cancer," says Brand-Miller, known for her book *The Low GI Diet*. The GI stands for glycemic index, a measure of the effects of carbohydrates on blood sugar levels.

According to Brand-Miller, these findings sit neatly with data from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, national dietary surveys and industry. **"Australians have been eating less and less sugar, and rates of obesity have been increasing,"** she says.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/a-spoonful-of-sugar-is-not-so-bad/story-e6f8rgy6-1226090126776>

Yes, Dr Spence, that is awkward: the University of Sydney's "independent investigation" simply buried the adverse evidence, either inadvertently or deliberately.

I simply don't know exactly what to say about that.

How do you think that happened, Dr Spence? Readers?

## 2. COMPETENCE, QUALITY CONTROL, SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY, REPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Dr Spence, I advise you to think a little harder on your *Australian Paradox* quality control.

Your reputation is important. So too are the reputations of the two major institutions that you head, the University of Sydney and the Group of Eight (Go8).

Perhaps it's time for you to throw the Charles Perkins Centre's "shonky sugar study" under a bus **[via formal retraction]**?

Recall I gave you **four good reasons** to do exactly that in my piece yesterday.

There are no good excuses to keep doing nothing, to keep pretending that everything is fine.

Again, it is big mistake to try to hide behind **(A)** "academic freedom" and **(B)** the ham-fisted *Initial Inquiry Report* whitewash.

**(A)** "Academic freedom"? For what? For inept Charles Perkins Centre scientists to self-publish false pro-sugar information on the scientific record so it can be inserted into the public debate and become a menace to public health?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-12/scullion-says-sugar-is-killing-remote-communities/7162974> ;

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/a-spoonful-of-sugar-is-not-so-bad/story-e6frg8y6-1226090126776>

; <http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html>

On **(B)**, what for me appears really troubling, Dr Spence, is **how** the *Initial Inquiry Report* got it so wrong.

Was it inadvertent or was it deliberate? I do not know. What I know for sure, however, is that **proper quality control has not been a priority** at the highest levels of the University of Sydney.

My observation is that, in the *Australian Paradox* scandal, **pretending there is no problem seems to be the main priority** of the University of Sydney.

With the self-evidently fake flat line still sitting in the middle of my Figure 6, and my detailed discussions with the FAO documented in Figure 7 (p. 5), Professor Trewhella and Professor Clark appear to have some serious questions to answer if they ever make themselves available for interview. I'm sure they would not avoid proper scrutiny on this important matter.

But you already knew all about the disappearing fake-data issue, didn't you, Dr Spence?

After all, you and your Academic Board have **known since late 2014** - when I wrote to you and ~100 of your senior staff - that the "independent investigation" of the *Australian Paradox* scandal was an epic fail, **wrong on five of its seven**

**"Preliminary Findings of Fact"**: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Letter-Academic-Board-Inquiry-Report.pdf>

You know that. I know that. And several hundred observers know that, including ~100 of your staff plus plenty of journalists on my email list.

Readers, the *Initial Inquiry Report* whitewash is a furphy, now being used to lead reasonable people away from - not towards - the relevant facts of this matter.

Dr Spence, please read my letter yesterday again, this time carefully, and then reflect on the increasingly tarnished reputations of the University of Sydney and your Group of Eight (Go8).

**It is not okay to keep pretending everything is fine, when many of the rest of us are gob-smacked that nothing has been done - for four years - to fix the harmful false information that eluded your broken research-quality controls.**

Clearly, you need to work to reintroduce competence and integrity as a priority in Go8 research, so it can start to be trusted again by everyday taxpayers, including the Federal politician whose credibility was damaged by repeating in Federal Parliament the blatant falsehoods you say are fine: (3:33)

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4442720.htm>

Importantly, you need to stop championing "academic freedom" for those ineptly damaging public health.

In particular, you need to exert some proper control over your unreliable Charles Perkins Centre scientists and their reckless false information: <http://www.srasanz.org/news/do-carbohydrates-cause-weight-gain> ;

<http://australianbeverages.org/for-consumers/soft-drink-tax-answer/> ;

<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/diabetes.pdf>

### **3. IF GO8 RESEARCH "EXCELLENCE" NOT A PRIORITY, PLEASE JUST SAY SO, THEN REIMBURSE TAXPAYERS**

Dr Spence, everyday readers of my letter yesterday can see clearly that what I am saying is correct. **[Readers, please email me if you think that I'm wrong to make that claim. I think it is obvious that USyd & Go8 are recklessly wrong on all this.]**

The Charles Perkins Centre's infamous *Australian Paradox* paper is an academic disgrace and a menace to public health, and should be formally retracted without further unreasonable delay: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Harmful-misconduct-Charles-Perkins-Centre.pdf>

Why the unreasonable delays?

If the University of Sydney and the Go8 have given up on any real devotion to "excellence in research", and now prioritise "academic freedom" instead, that's fine.

But **please delete** the 14 uses of the word "excellence" in this document - <https://go8.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/role-importanceofresearchunis.pdf> - before reissuing.

**If you really love "academic freedom" more, please stop pretending that the Go8 prioritises "excellence in research".**

If you really have decided, as Chair of the Go8, to go with "academic freedom" rather than "excellence in research", please simply write a cheque for (say) \$5 billion, for starters, to reimburse Australian taxpayers defrauded by the Go8's false promises of "excellence".

**Taxpayers rightly are starting to ask: If the Go8 in general and the Charles Perkins Centre in particular cannot get the simple stuff right, how are they up to the challenge of doing the hard stuff?**

How much more taxpayer money is going to be wasted over the years at the palatial Charles Perkins Centre if there remains no competent quality control when it matters? <http://www.smh.com.au/national/university-sets-up-500m-centre-for-obesity-research-20130724-2qjq8.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBlh0wgAXMQ>

Looking back at your reply, I think your statement that I have run a "**campaign of public vilification**" is a bit strong.

I like to think of it as a determined campaign for improved competence and integrity in Go8 research, so that fewer current and future taxpayers - some of whom help to fund the Charles Perkins Centre extravaganza - die prematurely from over-consuming the substance your unreliable Charles Perkins Centre scientists have falsely exonerated as harmless - in a paper featuring clownish confusion between up and down and a reliance on fake data:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-12/scullion-says-sugar-is-killing-remote-communities/7162974> ;  
<http://www.foodpolitics.com/2016/03/sugar-in-australia-its-better-for-you/> ;

By the way, whatever happened to your University of Sydney slogan "Leadership for good starts here"? Just marketing, right?

rgds,  
 rory

**[Readers, another aspect of this USyd incompetence scandal is that Charles Perkins Centre *experts* know less now about the main cause of type 2 diabetes – and the simple LCHF dietary cure - than was known by many/most doctors some 100 years ago via a/the standard medical text: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/1923-Medicine-Textbook.pdf> ; pp.12-16 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/obesitysummit.pdf> ; p. 7 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Harmful-misconduct-Charles-Perkins-Centre.pdf> ]**

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**rory robertson**  
**economist and former-fattie**  
<https://twitter.com/OzParadoxdotcom>

A life in our times: Vale Alexander "Sandy" Robertson (1933-2015) + Postscript on Death, Dementia, Diet and Diabetes: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/AlecRobertson-born2oct33.pdf>

Are you getting fat and sick? Want to stop trends in your family and friends towards obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and various cancers? **Well, it's time to stop eating and drinking sugar:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDaYa0AB8TQ&feature=youtu.be> ; <http://www.peterbrukner.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/All-you-need-to-know-about-LCHF1.pdf>

Game-changer! 26 doctors treating fat and sick present strong evidence for why low-carbohydrate, high-fat (LCHF) diets **MUST** become standard treatment for obesity and type 2 diabetes (aka metabolic syndrome): <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0899900714003323> ; 37:00  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcLoaVNQ3rc>

**Comments, criticisms, questions, compliments, whatever welcome at [strathburnstation@gmail.com](mailto:strathburnstation@gmail.com)**

**[www.strathburn.com](http://www.strathburn.com)**

Strathburn Cattle Station is a proud partner of YALARI, Australia's leading provider of quality boarding-school educations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenagers. Check it out at <http://www.strathburn.com/valari.php>

Please email "Please delete" if you have no role in resolving this matter and would prefer not to receive occasional updates.

**CCed: Senior Executive Group of the University of Sydney, members of Academic Board and outside observers, including NHMRC, ARC and Go8 management**

Cc: Duncan Ivison <[duncan.ivison@sydney.edu.au](mailto:duncan.ivison@sydney.edu.au)>, Stephen Garton <[stephen.garton@sydney.edu.au](mailto:stephen.garton@sydney.edu.au)>, Tyrone Carlin <[tyrone.carlin@sydney.edu.au](mailto:tyrone.carlin@sydney.edu.au)>, Shane Houston <[shane.houston@sydney.edu.au](mailto:shane.houston@sydney.edu.au)>, Anthony Masters <[anthony.masters@sydney.edu.au](mailto:anthony.masters@sydney.edu.au)>, Philippa Pattison <[philippa.pattison@sydney.edu.au](mailto:philippa.pattison@sydney.edu.au)>, Tim Dolan <[tim.dolan@sydney.edu.au](mailto:tim.dolan@sydney.edu.au)>, "Sara.Watts@syd.edu.au" <[Sara.Watts@syd.edu.au](mailto:Sara.Watts@syd.edu.au)>, Anna Reid <[anna.reid@sydney.edu.au](mailto:anna.reid@sydney.edu.au)>, Dean of Architecture Design and Planning <[architecture.dean@sydney.edu.au](mailto:architecture.dean@sydney.edu.au)>, SCA Dean <[sca.dean@sydney.edu.au](mailto:sca.dean@sydney.edu.au)>, Gregory Whitwell <[gregory.whitwell@sydney.edu.au](mailto:gregory.whitwell@sydney.edu.au)>, John Shields

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