

Live Q&A with University of Sydney Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Jill Trehwella, regarding research misconduct and the *Australian Paradox* paper

Rory Robertson, August 2013

From: **rory robertson** <strathburnstation@gmail.com>

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Subject: fyi: Live Q&A with Sydney Uni Deputy VC Trehwella regarding research misconduct and Australian Paradox paper (The Conversation)

To: rory robertson <strathburnstation@gmail.com>

Professor Trehwella,

Congratulations on your extraordinary career at the highest levels of global science. I wonder if I could ask you - now Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) - about the University of Sydney's policy on research misconduct. First, does the University have and enforce such a policy? If not, why not? www.australianparadox.com

Professor, should a faulty self-published "peer reviewed" paper with a false conclusion based on falsified data be corrected/retracted or is it just fine that the high-profile false conclusion keeps misinforming the critical public debate - including in Federal Parliament - on the origins of obesity and type 2 diabetes, together the greatest public-health challenge of our times? <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/AustParadoxfalsifieddata.pdf>

Professor, do you understand growing community concerns about the dark cloud over competence and integrity in science surrounding the University's new Charles Perkins Centre? [see previous link]

Do you understand why increasing numbers of objective observers find it unsettling that [the] high-profile faulty paper's false conclusion is supportive of the University of Sydney's business as a service provider to the sugar and processed-food industries? <http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html> ; p.5

at [http://www.foodhealthdialogue.gov.au/internet/foodandhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/D59B2C8391006638CA2578E600834BBD/\\$File/Resources%20and%20support%20for%20reformulation%20activities.pdf](http://www.foodhealthdialogue.gov.au/internet/foodandhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/D59B2C8391006638CA2578E600834BBD/$File/Resources%20and%20support%20for%20reformulation%20activities.pdf) [google

"reformulating glycemic PDF" link does not work] and pp. 10-11

at <http://www.gisymbol.com.au/cmsAdmin/uploads/Glycemic-Index-Foundation-Healthy-Choices-Brochure.pdf>

Thanks for your time, Professor Trehwella. I look forward to your detailed responses.

This Conversation is "live" at <https://theconversation.com/an-insiders-account-of-the-human-genome-project-13040>

Readers, I'm arguing for the **correction or retraction** of the deeply flawed *Australian Paradox* paper, as well as **public investigations** into the *Australian Paradox* scandal by the **University of Sydney Senate**: <http://sydney.edu.au/senate/Fellows.shtml> - and the **National Health and Medical Research Council**: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about/nhmrc-senior-staff>

For the record, my claim regarding research misconduct as defined by the National Health and Medical Research Council involves (i) "recklessness or gross and persistent negligence"; (ii) "serious consequences, such as false information on the public record"; and (iii) "failure to declare and manage serious conflicts of interest" (Sections 7 and 10 at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/r39.pdf and Sections 1-10 in www.australianparadox.com).

On retractions, an example of an integrity-based policy is the following: "If a paper's major conclusions are shown to be wrong we will retract the paper. By doing so, and by being open about our motives, we hope to clarify once and for all that there is no shame in correcting the literature. Despite the best of efforts, errors occur and their timely and effective remedy should be considered the mark of responsible authors, editors and publishers."
<http://blogs.plos.org/speakingofmedicine/2012/09/25/the-role-of-retractions-in-correcting-the-scientific-literature/>

Readers, **another unsettling aspect** of the *Australian Paradox* scandal - featuring negligent analysis, falsified data, a high-profile false conclusion, damage to public health and major conflicts of interest - is that the "shonky sugar study" was **self-published** by the University of Sydney's *highest*-profile nutrition scientists in a *low*-profile pay-as-you-publish e-journal. Why? In my opinion, the obviously faulty paper never would have been published in a real journal with real quality controls.

When I say "self-published", I mean that the influential lead author - Professor Jennie Brand-Miller - and the "Guest Editor" of the publishing journal - Professor Jennie Brand-Miller - are the same person! Professor Trehwella last year assured me that this has something to do with "internationally accepted standard practice" (see Section 8 at <http://www.australianparadox.com/>).

That too is unsettling, coming from the person in charge of ensuring taxpayers' research funding is properly spent. What is going on at the University of Sydney?

For those interested, consider my comments at:

x <https://theconversation.com/how-we-deal-with-alleged-research-misconduct-nhmrc-17101>

x <https://theconversation.com/from-fraud-to-fair-play-australia-must-support-research-integrity-15733>
(Note: <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3823977.htm>)

x <https://theconversation.com/energy-drinks-and-sudden-death-us-regulators-investigate-10813>

x <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2013/198/7/characteristics-community-level-diet-aboriginal-people-remote-northern-australia>

x <https://theconversation.com/innovative-strategies-needed-to-address-indigenous-obesity-7099>

x <http://retractionwatch.wordpress.com/2012/09/25/if-a-papers-major-conclusions-are-shown-to-be-wrong-we-will-retract-the-paper-plos/>

Readers, please be very critical of me in these "live" public fora, if you think I have my facts wrong or that I'm being unreasonable in any way. By contrast, if you think what I am arguing is more than reasonable, I wouldn't mind a little support.

Regards,

Rory

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rory robertson

economist and former-fattie 🙄

Join the push to give all kids a fairer start in life: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugary-Drinks-Ban.pdf>

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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/yalari.htm>

Comments, corrections, questions, compliments, whatever - all welcome

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