

University of Sydney Inquiry factually incorrect on 5 of 7 "Preliminary Findings of Fact"

Still, Inquiry gives Australian Paradox a fail grade, recommends authors re-write paper under strict supervision

By Rory Robertson, 27 July 2014 <https://twitter.com/OzParadoxdotcom>

1. INTRODUCTON

The Australian Paradox scandal is a multi-year saga involving unacceptably unreliable "science" at the highest level of Australian Group of Eight university research. Here is independent Investigator Professor Robert Clark AO's 18 July Initial Inquiry Report into the competence and integrity of the University of Sydney Charles Perkins Centre's Australian Paradox research: <http://sydney.edu.au/research/documents/australian-paradox-report-redacted.pdf>.

The University of Sydney of course quickly put a positive spin – for it - on the Initial Inquiry's preliminary findings: <http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newscategoryId=47&newsstoryid=13779> ; <http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newscategoryId=47&newsstoryid=13780>

By contrast, here's how it was reported by an **ABC investigative journalist** with a strong understanding of the Australia Paradox scandal: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/independent-review-finds-issues-with-controversial-sugar-paper/5618490>

What follows is **my Draft Response to the Initial Inquiry Report**. I encourage all interested observers to assess my take on the facts of this matter, and please correct me if you think I am wrong. In particular, I would like to hear from the Investigator, Professor Robert Clark AO; University of Sydney Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Jill Trehwella ; and the Australian Paradox authors - Professor Jennie Brand-Miller and Dr Alan Barclay – if they think anything I have written in this Draft Response is factually incorrect or otherwise unreasonable. If concerns arise, I will, naturally, correct any matters of fact ASAP.

My main finding is that, awkwardly, **five of seven of Professor Clark's "Preliminary Findings of Fact" are factually incorrect**. These mis-readings of fact - 1, 2, 3, 5 (or the second "4" as listed in the Report) and 7 (p. 16-18) – are discussed below. Unfortunately, the Initial Inquiry Report did not get to the heart of several critical matters. Key evidence has been overlooked, ignored or misinterpreted by Professor Clark. Problem 1 is the falsified FAO data conspicuously flat-lining in the authors' "best" chart (page 3). Critically, the authors' more valid/reliable indicators of sugar consumption tend to trend up not down over the relevant 1980 to 2010 timeframe (page 2).

These dominating problems argue strongly for the **formal retraction** of the profoundly flawed Australian Paradox paper. To assist the scientific-integrity process, my **proposed retraction notice** is reproduced in Section 6, below.

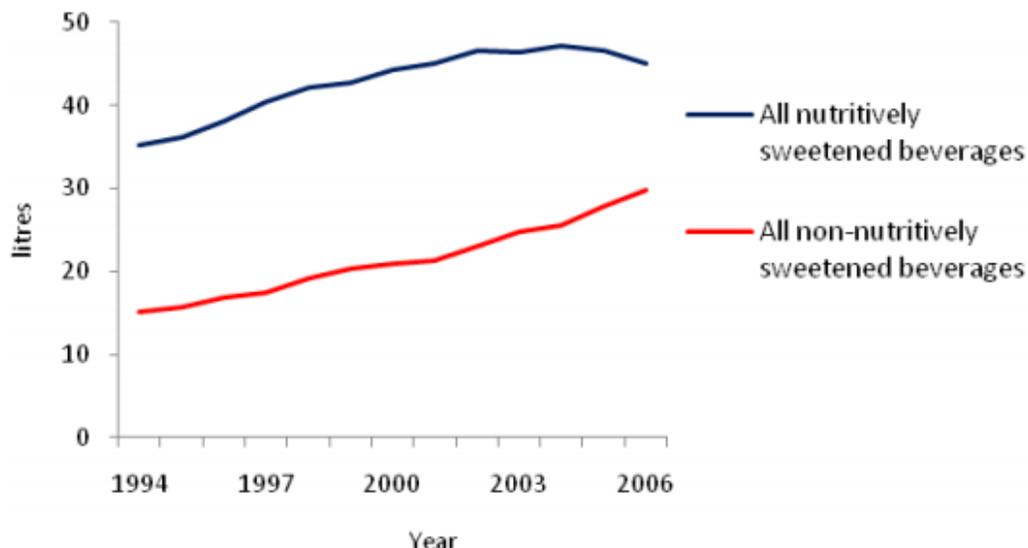
To assist the scientific-integrity process, I encourage Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay to formally retract their **profoundly faulty paper and its false "finding" - "an inverse relationship" between sugar consumption and obesity - from the scientific record and from the University of Sydney's Glycemic Index business website: <http://www.glycemicindex.com/>**

Professor Clark clearly tried hard to be fair to both sides – recommending that the authors re-write their profoundly faulty research from scratch is evidence of that - but, unfortunately, by fumbling the ball on a range of critical matters he has damaged the prospects for any quick end to this slowly-inflating Australian Paradox scandal. The public debate on the formal retraction of Australian Paradox can be followed at <https://twitter.com/OzParadoxdotcom> (Just click - no login is required.)

The remainder of this Draft Response to the Initial Inquiry Report is organised as follows:

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Figure 2: Australian softdrink sales; Top (dark) line is sugary softdrinks (Litres per person per year)



Source: Australian Paradox

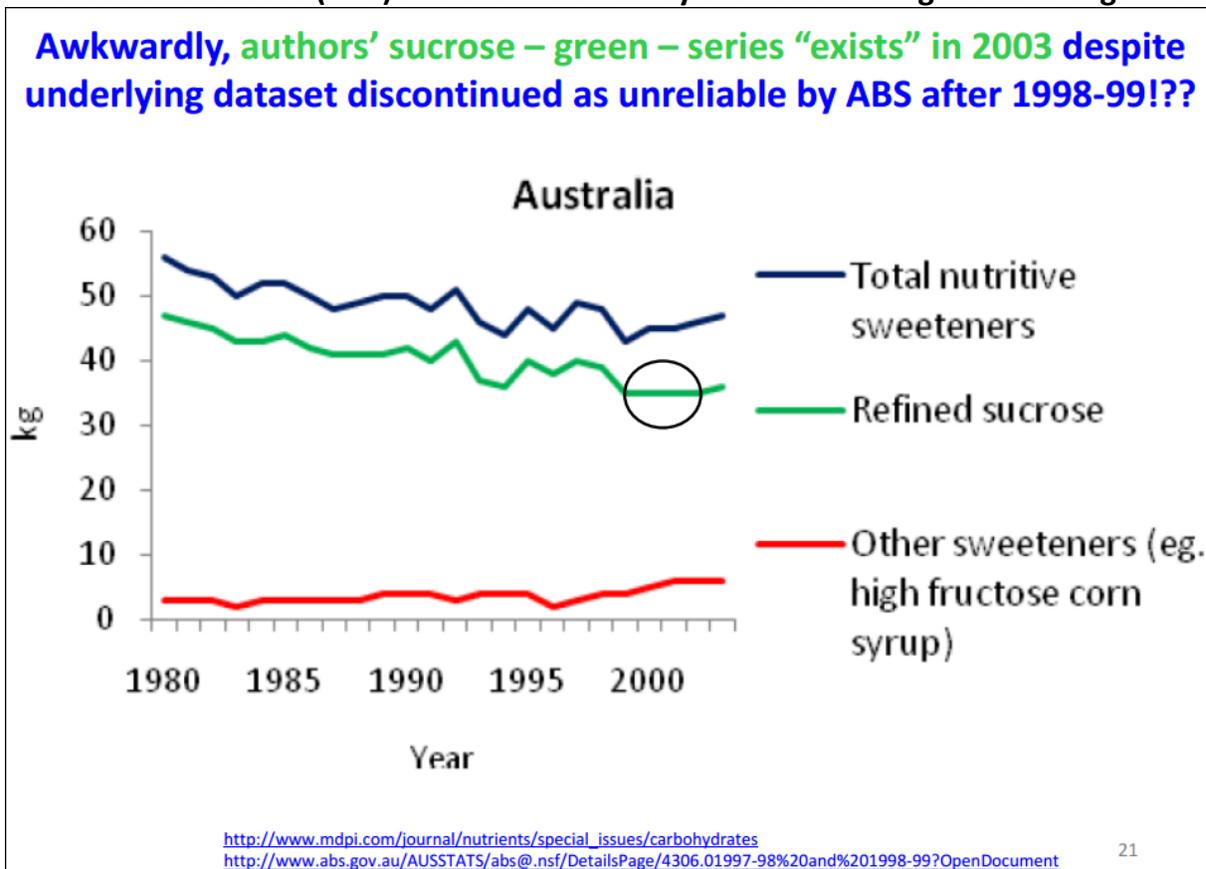
Figure 4a: National surveys - Children



* Including coffee, tea and low joule soft drinks.

Source: Australian Paradox

Figure 3: Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay’s “best” evidence was discontinued as unreliable by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and then falsified by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



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

Australian Bureau of Statistics

1997-98 AND 1998-99 **4306.0**

APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF FOODSTUFFS AUSTRALIA

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) WED 25 OCT 2000

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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>

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

2. INITIAL INQUIRY RESULTS

In a carefully worded judgement, the University of Sydney's independent Investigator, Professor Robert Clark AO, found - in an "on balance" decision - that the case for research misconduct (a.k.a. scientific fraud) against its influential food scientists and Low-GI advocates "has not been established" (p. 3). The Investigator, however, found serious problems with the competence and integrity of the infamous Australian Paradox research, so much so that he gave it a **FAIL grade**:

I have...identified a number of 'lessons learnt' from this case and I recommend that these be considered by the University and discussed with Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay at Faculty level. In particular, I recommend that the University consider requiring Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay to prepare a paper for publication, in consultation with the Faculty, that specifically addresses and clarifies the key factual issues examined in this Inquiry. This new paper should be written in a constructive manner that respects issues relating to the data in the Australian Paradox paper raised by the Complainant (p. 4)

Yes, Professor Clark gave the Australian Paradox research a clear fail and recommended that the authors be instructed to **re-write their faulty paper from scratch UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION** ("in consultation with the Faculty"). I presume he did this because he views the original "findings" of "a consistent and substantial decline" in sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010 - and so "an inverse relationship" between sugar consumption and obesity - as untrustworthy.

I see this as a win for common sense and improved scientific integrity, as well as vindication of my determined efforts over the past two and a half years. For those of you who doubt I am doing the right thing by continuing to argue near and far for the retraction of the profoundly faulty Australian Paradox paper, let me remind you that the research is extremely well-qualified.

Recall that Australia's most-widely trusted dietitian, **Dr Rosemary Stanton**, agreed with me two years ago that the "finding" of "a consistent and substantial decline" in per-capita consumption of sugar between 1980 and 2010 is incorrect: (page 18)
<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf>

The Investigator advising the University that its dodgy research should be re-written is about as much as I could have hoped for this first time around. Is such an outcome unprecedented or just extremely unusual?

Unfortunately, the Investigator's "Initial Inquiry" did not get to the heart of several critical matters. Key evidence has been overlooked, ignored or misinterpreted by Professor Clark, leading to most of the Inquiry's "Preliminary Findings of Fact" being factually incorrect. I hope my further detailed explanations and clarifications below assist the next stage of the formal inquiry into these important matters.

3. EIGHT SERIOUS PROBLEMS

Readers, what I know for sure is that my correct critique - <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/RRsubmission2inquiry.pdf> - of the profoundly flawed Australian Paradox research will stand the test of time.

PROBLEM 1: I was shocked to realise that Investigator Professor Robert Clark AO didn't bother to assess the veracity of the evidence I provided to his inquiry. So too, I am unhappy that after not even bothering to look at the key evidence I provided, he promoted an unfounded smear on my credibility and integrity, writing: **"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).

The relevant FAO sugar/*sucrose* series for the years 2000 to 2003 is falsified, and that flat-lining, dead-ending falsified series (see previous page) remains at the heart of this Australian Paradox research-integrity scandal.

The "detailed evidence" that the Investigator carelessly claimed does not exist continues to hide in plain sight in the form of my series of emails with the FAO in 2012: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf> (posted on my website for about 18 months).

Indeed, my detailed discussion of this matter and my *FAOfalsifiedsugar* link are still sitting patiently – unread by the Investigator - on page 4 of my *Submission* to the Initial Inquiry: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/RRsubmission2inquiry.pdf>

The FAO's unwise falsification of the Australian sugar/*sucrose* data in the early 2000s was simply the FAO's dumb response to the ABS discontinuing its Apparent consumption of sugar series as unreliable after 1998-99. **Without that falsified FAO flat line, the authors perhaps would have had to explain that their preferred evidence no longer is published because of reliability issues:** <http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html>

This **critical ABS/FAO data-dead-end** – an issue that shreds the credibility of the original Australian Paradox paper - was highlighted in my presentation for the *Debate on The place of sugar in Australia's Dietary Intake Guidelines in Parliament House, Canberra*, on Monday 29 October 2012: pp. 21-22
<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf>

So too, the detail of the FAO's falsification is discussed in detail in Section 3 of my joint critique of the three Australian Paradox papers: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

This 13 February 2012 email from an FAO official confirms that what I am saying is true:

*...In the case of Australia I have looked at the time series and there is some food of Sugar & syrups nes and Sugar confectionary [sic] 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...

Contrast Letter 4 with Letter 6 at: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>

As we all now can see, the falsified FAO sugar/*sucrose* series features as the **conspicuous flat green line in the authors' "best" chart** (page 3). That remarkable falsified flat line - on which the authors long have chosen not to remark - would have been a **RED FLAG** for many competent scientists.

So too, with the FAO's shonky sugar/*sucrose* series **dead-ending at 2003** when the original Australian Paradox paper was submitted in 2011, competent reviewers might have said “Hey, what's the story with the dodgy dead-ending flat line”? Truncated flat lines are not normally embraced by competent scientists as "evidence" for their pet story.

That intriguing dead-ending flat line – not a paradox, just falsified data - also features in **Question 8 of my increasingly-popular Charles Perkins Centre Quick quiz on research integrity:** <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/quickquizresearch.pdf>

Does anyone really think that the FAO publishing a made-up flat line for the period 2000 to 2003 - while pretending it originated genuine estimates based on underlying reality - is not “falsification”? Would you settle for the FAO “just making up four data points based on nothing credible to fill the unsightly, unavoidable gap in its database”?

The FAO's sugar/*sucrose* series post-1998-99 is a joke made-up series that rightly brings ridicule when it is promoted as credible “peer reviewed” science. The United Nations' job is to **help the starving children of Africa**, not putting resources into counting Australian sugar after the ABS gave up. What we know for sure is that the UN's FAO did not waste resources counting our sugar!

Bizarrely, the Investigator argued that the relevant 2000 to 2003 data points “**aren't in fact 'flat' but show some scatter and a slightly upward trend...**” (p. 10). Sorry, Professor Clark, but Blind Freddie can see that what I am saying about the data is correct.

Yes, “**...it is a quite serious statement to publicly allege that a UN agency would falsify data in this way**”. Yes, I too was amazed initially. But could the **FAO's falsification** of the Australian sugar data for the early 2000s **be any clearer than I've documented?**

Readers, given that Investigator Professor Clark apparently did not have the time to consider the detailed evidence I provided to his research-integrity investigation when asked, it would have been good if he had taken the time to interview me at some point during his seven months on the job. **He interviewed the authors but he did not interview me. Why not?**

My critical evidence documenting the FAO's ham-fisted falsification of the Australian sugar data – alongside other serious problems with Professor Clark's "Preliminary Findings of Fact" (below) - means that the University of Sydney's "Initial Inquiry" findings lack credibility.

Please look again at my Figure 3 on page 3. Would Professor Clark have been comfortable promoting such obviously dodgy flat-lining, dead-ending data in one of his papers? Of course not! The idea that he would is ridiculous. Ask him.

Even the discredited e-journal *Nutrients* says - <http://www.mdpi.com/about> - it has a "zero tolerance policy" towards falsified data, although so far it has done nothing about the flat-lining falsified figures in the Australian Paradox paper.

Journalists, why not phone a sample of our Group of Eight Vice-Chancellors and enquire about university policy regarding **scientists' use of falsified data in "peer reviewed" science?** Is reliance on falsified data okay or not okay?
<http://www.go8.edu.au/go8-members/go8-board>

Perhaps Professor Clark will get in touch with me in coming weeks to apologise for overlooking my well-documented evidence. Perhaps he will invite me to be interviewed, as he begins the process of properly completing the research-misconduct investigation he agreed to conduct last December.

In the meantime, here's ABC investigator Wendy Carlisle's cracking and credible one-month investigation. From minute 21, I discuss my evidence regarding the FAO's falsified Australian sugar/sucrose data: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/2014-02-09/5239418>

And here's Wendy Carlisle's response to Professor Clark's Initial Inquiry Report:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/independent-review-finds-issues-with-controversial-sugar-paper/5618490>

I'm hoping that Wendy Carlisle or some other heavy-hitting journalist writes the next chapter of this epic Australian Paradox scandal, asking what the independent Investigator plans to do now that he knows for sure – as documented in my *Submission* - that the FAO's flat-lining dead-ending series at the centre of the action is indeed falsified.

PROBLEM 2: The authors also lack credibility on the issue of their falsified flat-lining FAO data. Despite claiming with straight faces to be impressively "familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the data", the authors again have failed to explain the conspicuous and falsified flat line dead-ending in the middle of this growing scandal: Figure 3 on p. 3 and pp. 12-13 in <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

Awkwardly, the authors' ongoing lack of competent examination and honest discussion of that conspicuous falsified flat line in their "best" chart - as you know, flat lines are rare in nature and rare too in competent scientific investigations of living things like animals, plants and humans – by itself confirms that their Australian Paradox research is dodgy to say the least, and that my observations of persistent negligence or worse are not exactly far-fetched.

Indeed, the combined confusion of the Investigator and both authors documented in the initial Report would be amusing, if it didn't basically make a farce of the investigation. The Investigator at one point observes "...the Australian Paradox authors weren't sure about the detailed methodology underpinning FAO data..." [while]... "I indicated that we both needed to check the facts" (p. 8). And yet the call to me to explain the facts to them never came!

The authors' latest false suggestion is that the FAO's conspicuous dead-ending flat line is just fine and provides "for a robust and meaningful comparison of trends" (p. 1, Attachment 3). **Clearly, that's complete non-science.** Do the authors really wonder why they are struggling for respect as "scientists"? **Again, as we all now know, the FAO simply invented that flat line for the 1999-2003 period on the basis of nothing credible, after the ABS stopped spoon-feeding it sugar/sucrose data post 1998-99:**
<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>

Back in 2011, that conspicuous flat line coming to a dead-end at 2003 **would** have been a RED FLAG for most competent scientists, and **should** have been a RED FLAG for any reviewers appointed by a Guest Editor to review her formal scientific paper.

Given the clownish quality-control process didn't nip this non-science in the bud, the Investigator must have been impressed by the pumped-up nonsense the authors presented to him: "From our informed viewpoint..." and "Qualified dietitians and nutritionists are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the data utilised in *The Australian Paradox*" (p. 2, Attachment 3).

I checked the facts with the FAO in February 2012 (see Letter 4). It turns out that the authors only bothered to make contact with the FAO on the nature of its dataset on 25 February 2014 (p. 1, Attachment 3), three years after they published the paper that they have spent the past two and a half years falsely defending as flawless. It is the authors' spectacular ineptitude on the data front – including their inability to tell up from down (Problem 3) - that now sees them instructed to re-write their profoundly faulty research UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION ("in consultation with the Faculty").

PROBLEM 3: The elephant in the living room remains that the key finding of the Australian Paradox research - "a consistent and substantial decline" in Australians' per-capita consumption of added sugar between 1980 and 2010 - is clearly false and misleading. The Investigator failed to explain how it is reasonable for the authors to promote such a "finding" when the data in four of their own published charts trend up not down, with their fifth series discontinued as unreliable by the ABS and then falsified by the FAO: see charts on pp. 2-3, and on pp. 4-10 of <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

To be clear, I am NOT claiming – as the Investigator says I am claiming - that the 1980-2010 trend in sugar consumption is up, only that it is more likely to be up than down. My strongest claim remains that the influential "finding" of "a consistent and substantial decline" is unreasonable, even ridiculous, given the evidence the authors presented. That is, a range of valid indicators in their own published charts clearly contradict their main "finding": Figures 1, 2, 4a, 6a in my *GraphicEvidence* link.

Of course, the "true" trends in Australian sugar consumption are unknowable. That's my point: the valid indicators of sugar consumption all are **somewhat imperfect and unreliable**. Strong findings thus should be made only with great caution. After all, the Investigator himself documented that the ABS discontinued its Apparent consumption of sugar series as unreliable after 60 years! **No-one knows the extent to which consumption was underestimated for decades as the ABS's counting problem increasingly morphed from counting bags of sugar to counting grains of sugar in many, many thousands of processed food and drink products:** (pp. 4-5) <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/New-nonsense-based-sugarreport.pdf>

As noted earlier, Dr Rosemary Stanton, Australia's most-trusted nutritionist, has confirmed that I am correct on this matter: "And yes, I agree with you [Rory] that we have no evidence that sugar consumption in Australia has fallen" (again, p. 18 in the *Canberra* link above).

For the record, at a Charles Perkins Centre event at the University of Sydney on 24 July 2014, I confirmed with ABS officials - in the presence of a room full of maybe 80 dietitians (including Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay), public-health officials and scientists that there is little or no useful information on added sugar/sucrose that can be gleaned from the new *Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results - Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12*. The problem is that added sugar is lumped in with intrinsic sugars, like lactose in milk. Thus the new dataset has little or no contribution to make to ***Australian Paradox Revisited, Revisited***, or whatever the authors call their next pro-sugar publication.

PROBLEM 4: I have NOT criticised the ABS, as suggested by the Investigator (p. 19). Indeed, I have praised the ABS for discontinuing its 60-year-old sugar series after it realised its increasingly outdated and overwhelmed methodologies were underestimating apparent sugar consumption in Australia. Please see the third dot-point on the 11th page of <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>

On the positive side, the Investigator did an excellent job in prompting the ABS to document in more detail - as I have explained many times - that it abandoned its apparent consumption of sugar series after 1998-99 because of growing reliability problems that it did not have the resources to fix (Appendix 5, p. 5).

Again, on the key issue of data availability and reliability, the ABS has confirmed - for at least the third time - that its apparent consumption of sugar series was **discontinued as unreliable after 1998-99**, in part because of the particular difficulties in measuring the myriad millions of grams/grains of sugar already embedded in the many, many thousands of imported processed food and drink products.

I discussed this matter on an ABC Radio National's *Background Briefing* investigation of the Australian Paradox in February: from minute 18 at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/2014-02-09/5239418>.

So too, back in 2012, in the handout for my presentation in Parliament House Canberra, I highlighted some of the ABS's key measurement problems with added sugar: p. 40

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

The following statement should be scrutinised by objective observers: I have an excellent record of getting the facts right in this Australian Paradox scandal, whereas the authors do not. That is why I continue to jump up and down. On the ABS/FAO data, the authors have been hopelessly unreliable: **promoting misinformation along the lines that the ABS had no issues with reliability**. Outrageously, they were at it again during the "Initial Inquiry", claiming falsely to the Investigator – who soon knew better - that the ABS series was discontinued **"due to resource issues, not lack of reliable data"** (p. 1, Attachment 3). Have they chosen to remain unaware of easily known facts or were they simply trying to have a lend?

Along the same lines, on Figure 1 in *Australian Paradox Revisited* – the authors' second attempt at rebutting my correct critique – Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay suggested that apparent consumption statistics no longer are available for "any foodstuff, including sugar". Yet that self-serving suggestion is mocked by Canberra's ongoing publication at that point of **official estimates for easier-to-measure food and drink products, including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, butter, milk, cheese, beer and wine**: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/nutrients-03-00491-s003.pdf> ; Tables 2.3 and 2.4 at http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1910819/food-stats2009-10.pdf ; and <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4307.0.55.001/>

PROBLEM 5: By contrast, it is true that I have been highly critical of the reckless embrace of unreliable data and methodologies by the FAO and various sugary food-industry service providers.

The food-industry service providers I have in mind include the authors <http://www.theaustralianparadox.com.au/> ; the University of Sydney's Glycemic Index business <http://www.glycemicindex.com/> ; Green Pool Commodity Specialists <http://greenpoolcommodities.com/contact/> ; and Mr Bill Shrapnel. Mr Shrapnel explicitly represents the sugar industry <http://www.srasanz.org/about-us> and only recently - after my loud jumping up and down - was removed as "Deputy Chairman of the Sydney University Nutrition Research Foundation" (google it). **The academic head of the Charles Perkins Centre, Professor Stephen Simpson, knows the background:** <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/LettersCPCProfSimpson.pdf>

Importantly, critical information provided in the ABS's formal response to the Investigator's inquiries - "These factors were supplied [to the sugar industry via Green Pool in 2012] along with appropriate caveats including that the ABS no longer believed them to be appropriate" (Attachment 5, p. 5) - reinforces my claim that Green Pool's shonky sugar series - is an industry-driven hoax: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugarindustry-uni-sugarstudy25.pdf>

Again, the ABS sugar data became increasingly unreliable over its 60-year lifetime – via an intensifying multi-decade trend towards the increased consumption of manufactured/processed foods rather than home-cooked foods - before being discontinued as unreliable after 1998-99; so too, the ABS abandoned its counting algorithms as unreliable - "the ABS no longer believes these to be appropriate". This all confirms my observation that the Green Pool sugar series is unreliable – by disingenuous industry design - and cannot be trusted.

From the perspective of a research-integrity inquiry at a Group of Eight university, it matters a great deal that the sugar industry's disingenuous Green Pool series has been enthusiastically promoted by the Australian Paradox authors, by the Deputy Chairman of the Sydney University Nutrition Research Foundation, by the University of Sydney's Glycemic Index business and the sugar industry itself in a series of failed attempts to rescue the industry friendly but profoundly flawed Australian Paradox paper: <http://scepticalnutritionist.com.au/?p=514> ; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/New-nonsense-based-sugarreport.pdf> ; <http://www.sugaraustralia.com.au/Shared/Green%20Pool%20Report%20Media%20Release.pdf> ;

Disturbingly, the sugar industry's Green Pool blatant misinformation continues to be promoted by the University of Sydney's highly conflicted nutritionists and other industry partners. Note the authors' unreasonable description of the sugar industry's disingenuous Green Pool dataset as a "new independent review": <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/JBM-AWB-AustralianParadox.pdf> ; <http://www.gisymbol.com/category/products/sweeteners/> ; <http://www.glycemicindex.com/> ; <http://www.srasanz.org/about-us> ; <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/a-spoonful-of-sugar-is-not-so-bad/story-e6fgrg8y6-1226090126776> ; http://www.srasanz.org/media/uploads/Is_Australia_Losing_Its_Sweet_Tooth.pdf <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugarindustry-uni-sugarstudy25.pdf> ; <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2012/10/sugar-industry-lies-campaign>

The bottom line on these FAO/ABS issues is that the authors and the Investigator failed to credibly deal with the fact that the FAO data featured in the authors' first "line of evidence" has been confirmed as falsified, while the ABS data in the same chart has been confirmed as having been discontinued as unreliable (Figure 3 on p. 3). Accordingly, we know all we need to know to decide that the Australian Paradox "finding" of an "inverse relationship" between sugar consumption and obesity is unreliable and cannot be trusted.

That's especially the case when we observe that, bizarrely, the authors' other two critical "lines of evidence" – a 30% uptrend in sugary softdrink sales (Figure 2, page 2) and unambiguous uptrends in the national nutrition data for children (Figure 4a, page 2) – clearly contradict their "finding" of "a consistent and substantial decline" over the 1980 to 2010 timeframe (see Problems 6 and 7).

PROBLEM 6: The independent Investigator, outrageously, makes nothing of the authors' continued false claim that the national nutrition survey data for Australian children suggest that added-sugar consumption trended down not UP over the relevant 1980 to 2010 timeframe (Attachment 3, p. 1). In fact, all four indicators of consumption in the authors' own Figure 4a (page 2) trend UP not down, clearly contradicting the authors' preferred "finding". (Readers, look back. Am I wrong?)

PROBLEM 7: Nor, amazingly, does the Investigator properly assess the authors' clownish tangles and misrepresentations in their sugary-softdrink story. Even today, Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay continue to claim that their 30% uptrend in sugary softdrink sales over the 12 years 1994 to 2006 (see page 2) reinforces - rather than contradicts! - their "finding" of a "consistent and substantial" decline in sugar consumption over the 1980 to 2010 timeframe.

My summary on sugary softdrinks is that there is **no way in the world** that added sugar consumed - per person per year - via sugary softdrinks declined over the relevant 1980 to 2010 timeframe. The authors' impressively clownish softdrink story has been shredded in fine detail on pp. 10-12 of <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

Speaking of unreasonable, the authors highlight the introduction of *Pepsi Next* ("30% less sugar") as something that supports their false conclusions (p. 2, Attachment 3). Yet it seems that *Pepsi Next* was not even available in the 1980 to 2010 period! http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pepsi_Next

PROBLEM 8: The Investigator was mistakenly generous in insisting that the University of Sydney's highly conflicted Low-GI advocates didn't really mean to send a message to readers that "sugar and obesity aren't [positively] linked" (p. 12). Seriously!

This is fantasy. In fact, claiming that "sugar and obesity aren't [positively] linked" appears to be the **MAIN** purpose of the Australian Paradox paper. Readers, please look at the key "findings" the authors highlighted in "4. Discussions" and "5. Conclusions" on p. 2 of <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

Sugar consumption – particularly via softdrinks - supposedly declined as obesity increased, so sugar clearly is not the problem! **Sugar is innocent!** That the authors' "peer-reviewed" Australian Paradox "finding" was used to falsely exonerate sugar - and sugary drinks in particular - as a key driver of obesity is what I have been complaining about for the past two and a half years!

That the Australian Paradox paper "exonerated" sugar was not an accident, as claimed by the Investigator. Look at how the authors also "exonerate" added sugar as a cause of type 2 diabetes in their range of pop-sci diet books: (3 pages) <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/diabetes.pdf> ; (3 pages) <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugar-myths-SydUni-GI-crew.pdf>

Those various University of Sydney pop-sci diet-book claims regarding sugar and obesity/type 2 diabetes also are dodgy to say the least, including because sugar is 100% carbohydrate, and it's increasingly clear that carb-restricted, high-fat (LCHF) diets tend to fix both obesity and type 2 diabetes: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0899900714003323>

The highly conflicted authors' themselves also let the cat out of the bag on their true sentiments when they got all bothered by the Investigator's "subject expert", who they say has an "academic and publicly expressed bias against sugar" (p. 1 in Attachment 6). "Lane 3: Reality check for Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay please"!

In another strange episode, Professor Brand-Miller told the ABC *World Today* program in October 2013 that **Australia's fat kids don't have a problem with sugary softdrinks because America's fat kids are drinking "10 times as much"**:

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2013/s3868327.htm> That's wrong by at least several multiples: http://assets.coca-colacompany.com/ba/22/39fae0564dcda20c694be368b8cf/TCCC_2010_Annual_Review_Per_Capita_Consumption.pdf

(I wrote highly conflicted because the authors operate the University of Sydney's GI business that puts Healthy GI stamps on sugar and sugary products for up to \$6,000 a pop: <http://www.gisymbol.com/category/products/sweeteners/> and p.5 [http://www.foodhealthdialogue.gov.au/internet/foodandhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/D59B2C8391006638CA2578E600834BB/D/\\$File/Resources%20and%20support%20for%20reformulation%20activities.pdf](http://www.foodhealthdialogue.gov.au/internet/foodandhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/D59B2C8391006638CA2578E600834BB/D/$File/Resources%20and%20support%20for%20reformulation%20activities.pdf))

Disturbingly - given that sugar is indeed a menace to public health - Professor Brand-Miller used her paper in 2011 to campaign with a friend of the sugar industry - <http://www.srasanz.org/about-us> - against Canberra's proposed toughening of dietary advice for added sugar, as did other key players in the food and drinks industry: p. 11

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

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

To this day, the authors continue to insist that the relationship between sugar&sugary softdrinks and obesity is **"an inverse relationship"**, which is precisely the opposite of what public-health authorities are saying. (Yes, it's simply a paradox - nothing to do with research competence and integrity!)

Readers, I've remained determined on this matter because the unlikely conclusion of "a consistent and substantial decline" in sugar consumption over the 1980 to 2010 timeframe – have you been visiting supermarkets, 7-11 stores and service stations over the past three decades? - was purposefully combined with obesity statistics by the authors to insist that there is "an inverse relationship" between sugar consumption – particularly via sugary soft drinks - and obesity in Australia: The Australian Paradox!

A more observant Investigator would have found that the authors set out purposefully to argue that **"sugar is innocent"**; and thus to claim that public-health efforts to restrict sugary softdrink consumption are useless or worse. After all, as you can see, that is the explicit policy conclusion of the paper (p. 2 *GraphicEvidence*). **Why shouldn't the nonsense-based Australian Paradox "finding" be formally retracted, given that it is both a menace to public health and an academic disgrace?**

4. SUMMARY OF AUTHORS' THREE "LINES OF EVIDENCE"

Readers, the authors have batted none for three. Not one of their "three independent lines of evidence" provides reliable support for their story of "a consistent and substantial decline" in per-capita sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010.

Here are the facts, in brief: (a) **Sugar availability** increased substantially over the 1980 to 2010 timeframe (Figure 1 in *GraphicEvidence*). (b) **Sugar consumption via sugary softdrinks** did not decline between 1980 and 2010. Indeed, it's hard to think that sugar consumption via sugary softdrinks did not increase substantially (Figure 2, p. 2).

After all, (c) **big-sellers like Coca Cola, Sprite and Fanta all still have sugar contents in excess of 10%**, and that 30% increase between 1994 and 2006 almost certainly was preceded by a similarly strong uptrend between 1980 and 1994. **Sugary softdrinks up. Sugary milk up. Sugary energy drinks up. Obesity up. What paradox?**

Again, the fact that decades-old big-sellers Coke, Sprite and Fanta still are 10%+ sugar makes the authors' focus on "30% less sugar" **Pepsi Next** look a bit silly (p. 2, Attachment 3). Amazingly, however, that story was embraced by the Investigator (p. 10). Yet **Pepsi Next** was not even on the market in Australia in the 1980 to 2010 period! Readers, what is going on here with the **Pepsi Next** furphy?

(d) **The national nutrition survey data in the authors' own chart suggest strongly that children's intake of added sugar trended up not down** (Figure 4a, p. 2). (e) Ironically, the **shonky Green Pool sugar series** also contradicts the authors' "finding", suggesting sugar consumption was flat/up over the quarter-century to 2010 (Figure 5 in *GraphicEvidence*).

(f) Importantly, the **ABS has confirmed (yet again) that its 60-year-old data series was discontinued after 1998-99 because of reliability issues**, and (g) I have confirmed that the **FAO data for the early 2000s – the conspicuously flat line in the authors' "best chart" – was falsified** (Figure 3 on p. 3): <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>

In summary, readers, the Australian Paradox's key "finding" is hopelessly wrong and should never have been published let alone defended. So the authors now are being forced via a research-integrity Inquiry to re-write their research, UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION ("in consultation with the Faculty").

Given that backdrop, I think it makes sense to issue a warning to Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay. In their recent media release, they claimed to be "preparing a paper for a major journal that updates *The Australian Paradox*":

<http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newscategoryid=47&newsstoryid=13780>

Unfortunately, as we have seen, the Australian Paradox paper needs to be retracted, not "updated". The Charles Perkins Centre's highest-profile obesity and diabetes researcher and her GI-business offside should be very careful in choosing what they write any next time around, as the issue of scientific fraud looms large over the Australian Paradox scandal, as I highlighted in my Submission: (p.1) <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/RRsubmission2inquiry.pdf> .

5. HAS RORY ROBERTSON DONE THE WRONG THING?

The authors have been very critical of my efforts in seeking the correction of the public record regarding their claimed "inverse relationship" between sugar consumption and obesity. They say "No scientist deserves the bullying and trial-by-media that a character like Rory Robertson can incite": Attachment 6 <http://sydney.edu.au/research/documents/australian-paradox-report-redacted.pdf>

What the authors have written in **Points 7, 10 and 12** is pretty strong stuff. They clearly are quite upset with me, as was confirmed in spades when I met Dr Alan Barclay briefly in the queue for coffee on 24 July at the Charles Perkins Centre's ABS seminar on its new *Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results - Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12* (see p. 7).

Accordingly, I would like to give my perspective. My response begins with the ideal that scientists are supposed to be engaged in an unrelenting search for the truth, not the avoidance of it. Importantly, the Investigator observed: "Faulty or poor quality papers are generally not recommended for publication, and a researcher's publication record is a major factor in attracting research funding" (p. 20).

In my opinion, scientists who publish without competent "peer review" and then recklessly defend "faulty or poor quality papers" with false conclusions – a.k.a. scientific fraud - should be disqualified from receiving taxpayer funding for any future research.

It's the "Faulty or poor quality papers are generally not recommended for publication" bit that makes the Australian Paradox scandal is so fascinating, and so important from the perspective of being able to trust the results of taxpayer-funded research. In the rest of this section, I try to put my growing research-integrity concerns into a broader context.

For starters, please note that the Australian Paradox authors are not shrinking violets beaver away at their desks writing papers that simply gather dust. They are high-profile and highly influential participants in the public debate as well as in Australian and (yes) even global public health. It is right and proper that their work be subject to greater levels of scrutiny than that of your average common brown garden academics.

That's particularly the case given that Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay are pretty much **the world's leading advocates of the pro-sugar Glycemic Index (GI) approach to nutrition:** <http://www.theaustralianparadox.com.au/about.php>

When not lecturing and researching at the University of Sydney and telling type 2 diabetics and women with Gestational Diabetes to eat plenty of carbohydrates - <http://www.australiandiabetescouncil.com/ADCCorporateSite/files/Of/Of5f0ab9-55da-45b5-9481-89f082333b6f.pdf>; <http://kemm.health.wa.gov.au/brochures/consumers/wnhs0560.pdf> - the low-GI crew is growing a GI business and selling millions of pop-sci diet books on the basis that sugar is not a big problem for public health: <http://www.gisymbol.com/category/products/sweeteners/>; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/diabetes.pdf>; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugar-myths-SydUni-GI-crew.pdf>

For whatever reason, the Investigator in his conflict-of-interest discussion (p. 15) did not get into the detail of the dollars – if any - that flow to the authors from their sales of millions of pop-sci diet books (~4 million GI books sold and counting).

In any case, back in 2010 - back in the pre-Australian-Paradox days - both **the University of Sydney's pro-sugar GI business** revenues and the credibility of the authors' best-selling low-GI diet books were **under growing pressure** as it became increasingly obvious to anyone with their eyes open that sugar - including in sugary drinks - is a menace to public health: <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf>

Indeed, Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) had begun to make noises about **toughening dietary advice against added sugar**: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2014/consultation-sugar-guideline/en/> ; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/canberradietary.pdf>

Worse still, for the authors, a random formerly fat former lawyer had emerged from the woodwork with a competing best-selling book - "**Sweet Poison**" - arguing that sugar is the key driver of obesity, type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases. David Gillespie claimed to have lost 40kg just by removing sugar - especially via sugary drinks - from his diet. His profile and that of his books was growing, including amongst politicians in Canberra (and now school principals and teachers).

Here's where it gets interesting: **fructose, the "sweet poison" half of sugar is super-low GI=19, close to the "healthiest" carbohydrate on Professor Brand-Miller's GI scale**. So, if fructose is indeed "toxic" in today's modern doses, as a growing number of scientists globally believe - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDaYa0AB8TQ&feature=youtu.be> - then the University of Sydney's pro-sugar GI business soon will need life support: <http://www.diabetes.co.uk/forum/threads/the-fundamental-flaw-with-low-gi-diets.30245/>

With that darkening environment for sugar, the University of Sydney's GI business and the authors' sales of pop-sci GI diet books as a background, 2011 brought the controversial publication of the high-profile GI advocates' Australian Paradox paper "proving" that sugar consumption is not a major factor driving obesity.

More than six months earlier, the basis of that paper had been flagged in *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "Brand-Miller... argues that Australia's consumption of sugar has actually decreased by about 23 per cent over the past 30 years. **'That to me blows David Gillespie's hypothesis out of the window'** [sic] she observed [despite the lack of any reliable data]: <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/diet-and-fitness/how-hard-can-it-be-to-cut-sugar-20100630-zmvt.html#ixzz37qYMsJFg>

This is all very interesting but it is **pure speculation** to wonder if the authors' ambition in publishing the "peer reviewed" Australian Paradox paper involved the use their University of Sydney/Group of Eight university "cred" and formal scientific "clout" to crush the credibility of **competing pop-sci author David Gillespie**, who correctly insists sugar is a menace to public health.

In any case, what we know for sure is that the original Australian Paradox paper was submitted for publication on 4 March 2011, despite the "Deadline for manuscript submissions: **closed (30 September 2010)**" http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special_issues/carbohydrates

So, here's the problem. As the Investigator notes, "Faulty or poor quality papers are generally not recommended for publication...". And yet that profoundly faulty paper with an obviously false conclusion - so obvious that this random member of the public saw the problem immediately - was published in a dodgy pay-as-you-publish e-journal, without competent "peer review and with the lead author operating as the Guest Editor, and so Head of Quality Control.

We now have confirmation from the Investigator's Report that the paper was indeed "peer reviewed" anonymously (p.16). We already knew that no-one competent had read carefully through the paper before it was published. We knew that because a range of obvious errors - including false conclusions - were formally published, with only a few of those problems so far belatedly if formally corrected this February, after nearly three years: <http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/6/2/663/htm>

Unfortunately, Professor Brand-Miller's quality control - both as lead author and as "Guest Editor" of the dodgy e-journal that published her profoundly flawed paper - was a catastrophic failure. Given that (second) Correction notice in the previous link, the reviewers she chose for her paper clearly were either incompetent on the day or went "missing in action" when it mattered. **For readers new to this slowly inflating Australian Paradox research-integrity scandal, the dodgy e-journal is *Nutrients***. Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay - in their communication with the Investigator - insist that *Nutrients* is excellent and that

its Editor-in-Chief - Professor Peter Howe – is "widely respected". Accordingly, "We have continued to submit articles for publication in *Nutrients*" (p. 3, Attachment 6).

Awkwardly, *Nutrients* is published by an entity called MDPI, which recently was added to Jeffrey Beall's infamous list of shonky publishers. He advises that academics who want to remain widely respected not submit papers to MDPI's journals, and to remove themselves from its Editorial Boards. Professor Brand-Miller and Professor Peter Howe both seem to have ignored that advice. Journalists might ask the University of Sydney and the University of Newcastle if they are comfortable with that situation: <http://scholarlyoa.com/2014/02/18/chinese-publisher-mdpi-added-to-list-of-questionable-publishers/> ; <http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/editors>

In my opinion, the authors have brought on themselves all of the stresses and strains they now bemoan. How so? Well, from the very start of this dispute – February/March 2012 - it was clear to anyone who took the time to look that my critique was substantial and well-supported by evidence: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/economist-v-nutritionists-big-sugar-and-lowgi-brigade-lose-20120307-1uj6u.html> ; <http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html>

Readers, what follows is **a brief recap of my experience with the authors, their journal *Nutrients* and their bosses at The University of Sydney.** Unfortunately, it is not a story that leaves one thinking that the future of "peer reviewed" Group of Eight scientific research is in good hands.

- I first came across the paper in July 2011 in *The Australian* newspaper. The University of Sydney's Mr Bill Shrapnel and Professor Brand-Miller were featured campaigning against the NHMRC's planned toughening of dietary advice against added sugar: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/a-spoonful-of-sugar-is-not-so-bad/story-e6frg8y6-1226090126776>
- After about six months of research, **I wrote to *Nutrients* and the University of Sydney to have one or both correct their misinformation in the public debate:** <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/TimeforNeweditor24052012.pdf>
- Instead of fixing its misinformation, ***Nutrients'* Editor in Chief - Professor Peter Howe - chose to write an *Editorial* bemoaning my efforts to have the public record corrected:** <http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/4/4/258/htm>
- Instead of fixing the misinformation, the authors raced to insist that there are no problems in the original paper. Again without competent "peer review", they published a piece called ***Australian Paradox Revisited*** that did not deal with the substance of my (still) correct critique. **Along the way, the authors went out of their way to invent a clownish story that cars not humans were consuming a big chunk of Australian sugar via ethanol production, in order to claim that I did not know what I was talking about. That shocking episode was documented by widely respected journalist Michael Pascoe:** <http://www.smh.com.au/business/pesky-economist-wont-let-big-sugar-lie-20120725-22pru.html>
- Instead of fixing the misinformation and counselling his scientists and food-industry service providers to be more careful, **University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence wrote to me to claim (falsely) that the *Australian Paradox* paper had been properly peer-reviewed, so get I should get lost:** p. 1 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/quickquizresearch.pdf>
- I have received no response of substance from the University of Sydney to **my \$40,000 Australian Paradox Challenge** issued to Vice-Chancellor Spence in June 2012: p. 6 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf>
- **Nearly two years later**, after their paper's credibility had been shredded (again) by ABC investigator Wendy Carlisle on Radio National's *Background Briefing* - <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/2014-02-09/5239418> - **the authors published a disingenuous "Correction" insisting falsely, again, that their paper has no substantial flaws**, while at the same time inadvertently confirming my claim that no-one competent had read the paper carefully before it was (self) published: <http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/6/2/663/htm>

Notably, the Investigator made nothing of all of the above in his initial Report on 18 July, yet the University of Sydney Research Code of Conduct states: **(3) “Researchers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their findings are accurate and properly reported. If they become aware of misleading or inaccurate statements about their work, they must correct the record as soon as possible”** (reproduced from p. 28 of the Investigator’s report).

Nor did the Investigator make any finding regarding **the blatant false claim by Professor Brand-Miller to investigator Wendy Carlisle on ABC Radio National**: "I'll just correct you there. My paper has not been criticised by any scientist..." - near minute 23 at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/2014-02-09/5239418> - despite Dr Rosemary Stanton and Professor Boyd Swinburn both publicly dismissing its “consistent and substantial decline” finding as incorrect in 2012, and five University of Western Australia (UWA) scientists making the same point in a peer-reviewed paper in 2013.

I don’t see how the Investigator – who had both the UWA Ridders *et al* paper and the *Background Briefing* interview – can claim there is no breach of point (3) of that Code of Conduct. Or has Professor Brand-Miller recently written a letter to *Background Briefing* to correct her blatant untruth? If so, I have not seen or heard of it. So I’m guessing she is yet to correct that blatant false claim that it’s only me – a dopey economist – who has criticised her profoundly faulty paper. For the longest time, I used to think that I was dealing with simple problems of competence but these days I’m not so sure.

It’s one thing for the authors to dismiss a nobody like me - who only knows the data far better than they - as a dud - “not a nutritionist”! - but it is **another matter entirely for Professor Brand-Miller to claim on national radio that no scientist had criticised her profoundly flawed paper when in fact she knew that several scientists had been rather vigorous on the issue.** I know she knew because I discussed the matter of those five UWA scientists’ paper with Professor Brand-Miller face-to-face at the Obesity Australia annual conference at the Australian National University last November: p. 4 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/LettersProfTrehwella.pdf>

Moreover, Professor Brand-Miller’s co-author Dr Barclay had been busy back in 2012 - in his capacity as a “peer reviewer” – with a couple of attempts to have the words “Australian Paradox” removed from the title of that highly critical UWA paper: http://www.biomedcentral.com/imedia/1147493792872314_comment.pdf For those interested, I reviewed the relevant aspects of the (modestly) flawed UWA paper – “Trends in sugar supply and consumption in Australia: Is there an Australian Paradox?” – back in September 2013: pp. 14-21 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/GraphicEvidence.pdf>

So, the authors have complained about my determined efforts to have them correct the misinformation they plonked into the critical public debate on the origins of obesity. And they have complained that I **should not have “breached the confidentiality of the inquiry”**. It’s too bad for Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay that I was under no obligation to keep the high-profile and still-inflating Australian Paradox scandal a secret. And that’s what I told Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Trehwella: Section 1 on p. 2 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/LettersProfTrehwella.pdf>

Nor were journalists required to keep the Australian Paradox scandal a secret, and it is notable that Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay did their ABC *Background Briefing* interviews (one on tape, one via emails) during the Inquiry.

Again, for the record, all I have ever asked of the authors is to correct the misinformation they plonked into the critical public debate on the origins of obesity. Two and a half years later, as reported on 18 July, the authors now are being **forced - via a research-integrity investigation - to correct the public record**, by writing a new paper from scratch UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION because their "findings" in the previous three Paradox papers cannot be trusted.

6. RETRACTION REQUIRED, TO CORRECT SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLIC RECORDS

The authors' soothing claims about the competence and integrity of their profoundly faulty Australian Paradox research are belied by their belated and disingenuous "Correction" in February: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/CPCscientistsresponse.pdf>

In short, the Australian Paradox research remains an academic disgrace and a menace to public health. Accordingly, I'm enthusiastic about the Investigator's plan for the three faulty formal papers published so far to be rewritten from scratch in the form of a single new paper. **I’m offering my “peer review” services *pro bono* to ensure we avoid another quality-control fiasco with Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay’s next paper, a.k.a. *Australian Paradox Revisited, Revisited!***

Importantly, formally retracting the profoundly faulty Australian Paradox paper and then starting from scratch seems a good compromise from a scientific-integrity viewpoint, taking somewhat harsher punishments down the track off the table.

As you may know, formal retraction is the standard way of maintaining the integrity of the scientific record. Roughly two faulty papers are formally retracted each business day in science globally: <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/38743/title/Top-10-Retractions-of-2013/>

To assist the process of protecting the scientific record, here's my **PROPOSED RETRACTION NOTICE**:

Abstract: *It has been brought to our attention by a reader of Nutrients that the conclusion of “a consistent and substantial decline” in per-capita sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010 in “The Australian Paradox: A Substantial Decline in Sugars Intake over the Same Timeframe that Overweight and Obesity Have Increased” is based on serious misinterpretations and errors that invalidate the finding of “an inverse relationship” between sugar intake and obesity. For example, the uptrend in the authors’ own chart – Figure 5A [Figure 2 overleaf] - suggests strongly that **sugar intake via softdrinks increased as obesity increased between 1980 and 2010.** Indeed, the same is true of Figure 4 [Figure 4a overleaf] which shows **four different indicators of sugar consumption by children all trending up not down over the relevant timeframe.** Unfortunately, those observations **eliminate two central “lines of evidence”** for the authors’ claimed “paradox”. Moreover, the other claimed “line of evidence” is based on a data series that was discontinued as unreliable by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) after 1998-99 and then **falsified for the 2000s** by the Food and Agriculture Organization: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf> MDPI has a strict “zero tolerance policy” towards the use of falsified data, whether the authors were aware of the invalidity of the data or not. Separately, the authors’ business links to the sugar and sugary food/drink industries [<http://www.gisymbol.com/category/products/sweeteners>] also are somewhat unsettling. Taking public-health considerations into account, particularly evidence that excessive sugar consumption is a major contributor to global obesity and type 2 diabetes - <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf> ; <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2014/consultation-sugar-guideline/en/> ; and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDaYa0AB8TQ&feature=youtu.be> - the Editorial Team and Publisher have determined that this manuscript should be retracted. Further, MDPI intends to conduct an investigation into how these problems successfully evaded all our normal quality-control processes. Twice. In the meantime, we also intend to retract Australian Paradox Revisited, the second faulty piece published in our journal by the same Charles Perkins Centre author and “Guest Editor”; and further, to seek the retraction of another sister piece published last year in BMC Public Health journal [<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/898/prepub>]. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but have chosen to take the only approach that gives proper priority to the integrity of the scientific record. [An earlier version of that proposed Retraction Notice is posted at <http://retractionwatch.com/2013/08/22/journal-to-feature-special-issue-on-scientific-misconduct-seeks-submissions/>]*

Readers, I've documented above a raft of serious problems in the Charles Perkins Centre's Australian Paradox research. I encourage those interested in the nitty-gritty to subject this piece - and everything else I have written - to intense scrutiny.

Again, all I've asked is for the University of Sydney Charles Perkins Centre's most-influential obesity and diabetes expert to correct her false “peer reviewed” formal “finding” of “an inverse relationship” between sugar and obesity.

Is that unreasonable? If not, why has it not happened?

In 2013, I spoke to the (then) CEO of MDPI, Mr Dietrich Rordorf, and he explained: “It is up to the authors’ university to commission an investigation into your claims of potentially falsified data. If the Publisher receives an official note from either the university or the academic editor to retract the paper, the paper will be taken down”: see comments below in <http://retractionwatch.com/2013/08/22/journal-to-feature-special-issue-on-scientific-misconduct-seeks-submissions/>

Now that the whole world can see for sure that the conspicuously flat-lining FAO sugar/sucrose series for the early 2000s - at the centre of the Australian Paradox scandal - is indeed falsified, it is time for University of Sydney to advise MDPI that the profoundly flawed Australian Paradox paper should be retracted:

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

Why has that not happened?

7. MY MOTIVATIONS AND THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH AT THE FLEDGLING CHARLES PERKINS CENTRE

From my perspective, the most disturbing aspect of the Australian Paradox scandal remains the University of Sydney's refusal to properly correct the public record **on the origins of obesity, which together with type 2 diabetes and related maladies represents the greatest public-health challenge of our times.**

Time and time again, the Charles Perkins Centre's Professor Brand-Miller, and Dr Barclay have refused to properly acknowledge the key facts that contradict their influential paper's bogus formal "finding" of "an inverse relationship" between the consumption of added sugar and obesity: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/CPCscientistsresponse.pdf>

In the Initial Inquiry documents (Point 10, Attachment 6), the authors correctly recounted my sense of their Australian Paradox efforts – “negligent”, “academic disgrace”, etc - but they **misrepresented outrageously my motivations. Here are some clues:** <http://www.australianparadox.com/baralaba.htm> ; (Part4) <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugary-Drinks-Ban.pdf> ; <http://www.strathburn.com/yalari.php> ; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/talktoyear3boys.pdf>

So, yes, it matters to me that so many of Charlie Perkins's mob in remote Australia suffer unacceptably short life-spans due in part to their diets on average containing **up to 25% added sugar, with thousands of young kids' lives wrecked almost before they begin:** (Box 2) <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2013/198/7/characteristics-community-level-diet-aboriginal-people-remote-northern-australia>

To me, it's a tragic irony that the Charles Perkins Centre's profoundly faulty Australian Paradox paper is exonerating added sugar as a menace to public health when Blind Freddie can see that sugar is in the process - alongside cigarettes and alcohol - of devastating the health of the Australians that Charlie Perkins cared about most.

Meanwhile, the authors also insist: "**There is absolute consensus that sugar in food does not cause [type 2] diabetes**": <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/diabetes.pdf> ; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugar-myths-SydUni-GI-crew.pdf>

That also is complete non-science. Of course, anyone can write whatever nonsense they like in pop-sci diet books. It is the false information that the Charles Perkins Centre's most-influential scientist simply plonked on the formal scientific record that remains my priority.

For the range of reasons discussed above, I'm calling on Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay to formally retract their profoundly flawed Australian Paradox paper. I am yet to hear a good argument - beyond that it would be inconvenient for the University of Sydney and its fledgling Charles Perkins Centre - as to why that should not happen.

My attitude is that if Professor Brand-Miller refuses to retract her profoundly faulty Australian Paradox paper, then perhaps she should be removed from her lead role in Australia's contribution to the multi-million-dollar **PREVIEW diabetes project:** <http://www.gisymbol.com/category/products/sweeteners/> ; <http://preview.ning.com/page/resources> ; <http://www.glycemicindex.com/>

In my opinion, that role should not be occupied by a researcher who appears to give insufficient priority to the veracity of the scientific record and who appears less than well-informed on the origins of the global obesity and type 2 diabetes epidemics: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/diabetes.pdf> ; <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0899900714003323>

In summary, my main claim remains that the Charles Perkins Centre's dud Australian Paradox research cannot be trusted. And - correct me if I am wrong - that seems to be exactly what Professor Robert Clark AO is saying. Moreover, if his "Initial Inquiry" had taken proper account of the clear evidence that the Australia Paradox scandal features falsified data, Professor Clark's research-integrity Report may have had a lot more to say.

My test of the priority given to competence and integrity in "peer reviewed" research at the University of Sydney 's fledgling Charles Perkins Centre is whether or not Professor Clark returns to properly finish the job he started – those five of seven mistaken "Preliminary Findings of Fact" need correction - and whether or not the Australian Paradox paper is formally retracted, as should be usual practice with profoundly faulty papers <http://retractionwatch.com/2013/12/30/the-top-10-retractions-of-2013/>

Finally, again, I offer myself as a “peer reviewer” for any next Charles Perkins Centre pro-sugar paper – say, ***Australian Paradox Revisited, Revisited?*** – although I wonder about the journal to be used, **now that *Nutrients’* publisher MDPI is on Jeffrey Beall’s list of shonky publishers:** <http://scholarlyoa.com/2014/02/18/chinese-publishner-mdpi-added-to-list-of-questionable-publishers/>

8. PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

The discussion above is my Draft Response to the Initial Inquiry Report. I am confident I have all my facts correct. As the dust settles over coming weeks, I intend to fine-tune this document as required. (Maybe remove some bolding?!) **Importantly, I encourage any and all interested observers to subject my claim that five of Professor Clark’s seven “Preliminary Findings of Fact” are factually incorrect to intense scrutiny, and please seek to correct me if you think I am wrong.**

In particular, I would like to hear from the Investigator, Professor Robert Clark AO; University of Sydney Deputy Vice–Chancellor (Research), Professor Jill Trehwella; and the Australian Paradox authors - Professor Jennie Brand-Miller and Dr Alan Barclay – if they think anything I have written in this Draft Response is factually incorrect or otherwise unreasonable. Naturally, I will correct any/all matters of fact ASAP.

Readers, please do not be shy if you’ve read anything above that you consider objectionable. I should warn would-be critics, however, that the response over the past two years to my **\$40,000 Australian Paradox Challenge** – p. 6 <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf> - has been a complete fizzer. **The good news is that the \$40,000 in cash is still up for grabs!**

That's it for now. **The ongoing debate on the formal retraction of the Australian Paradox paper and other public-health matters can be followed at my Twitter handle below.** Join in, if you like. As well, as usual, comments, criticisms, questions, compliments, whatever are welcome at strathburnstation@gmail.com

Best wishes,
Rory

rory robertson

economist and former-fattie

<https://twitter.com/OzParadoxdotcom>

Game-changer! 26 doctors treating fat and sick present strong evidence for why **Low-carb, 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>

ABC Radio National reports on University of Sydney Charles Perkins Centre’s Australian

Paradox scandal: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/independent-review-finds-issues-with-controversial-sugar-paper/5618490>

Honi Soit - University of Sydney newspaper - reports on the fledging \$500m Charles Perkins Centre's Australian Paradox

scandal: <http://honisoit.com/2014/03/sweet-research-goes-sour/>

Are you getting fat and sick? Well, it's time to stop eating and drinking sugar:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDaYa0AB8TQ&feature=youtu.be>

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

Click and scroll down for a **time-tested diet to reverse obesity and type 2 diabetes:**

<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/why-we-get-fat.pdf> Here's why it works: <http://garytaubes.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/WWGF-Readers-Digest-feature-Feb-2011.pdf> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0GSSSE4I8U> ; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTUspjZG-wc>

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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.php>