

Rory Robertson
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University of Sydney management active in expanding *Australian Paradox* fraud

Dear Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Stephen Garton and other members of the Academic Board <http://sydney.edu.au/secretariat/academic-board-committees/academic-board/membership.shtml> (as well as various groups of observers, including journalists),

I hope you all are well. On 26 February, I provided you with a *Five-year Update* on your Charles Perkins Centre's *Australian Paradox* fraud: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Big-5-year-update-Feb-2017.pdf>

I did not receive a reply. Why? Well, I guess the facts I provided are more than a little awkward. Readers, please recall my exchange of letters in January and February with Professor Garton and then Vice-Chancellor Spence, during which each in turn threatened to ban me from campus. I recall that Dr Spence still **owes me a video** (that he says does not exist despite part of it appearing on national TV) and Professor Garton still **owes me a letter of apology** for accepting and promoting malicious false claims provided by his untruthful informant/s (pp. 69-76).

In particular, Professor Garton claimed that I "attempted to interrupt" a conference presentation by Professor Brand-Miller on 3 November, 2016. Notably, Brand-Miller's presentation was of a long-awaited paper written in response to the main recommendation of the University's 2014 research-integrity Inquiry (pp. 67-69).

Again, I did not interrupt the presentation. Nor did I want to. I sat quietly for an hour, happy to wait, and then watch Professor Brand-Miller pretend again that fake data are reliable, and acceptable in Group of Eight science (p. 28 & 64). In our "exchange of letters", I asked why Vice-Chancellor Spence and Professor Garton, instead of threatening to ban me from campus, did not simply fix the blatant scientific fraud on campus, under their noses. This interaction was reported in *The Australian* newspaper (p. 77).

1. Group of Eight's promise to taxpayers of devotion to "excellence" in research is a sham

All up, my 26 February letter looks to have been left unanswered because Dr Spence, Professor Garton, the rest of the Academic Board, and everyone else, can see - via my *Five-year Update* link above - that the University's behaviour on this matter over recent years has been unethical, indefensible and unacceptable. Am I wrong?

Readers, for the past five years I have advised the formal retraction of the extraordinarily faulty *Australian Paradox* paper. That has not happened. Instead, the University of Sydney has pretended that all is well, simply refusing to properly address the relevant factual issues. By not responding to the detailed facts provided, Dr Spence and Professor Garton appear to have decided to go back to pretending that everything is fine, except me.

But given the Group of Eight's promise to taxpayers of "excellence" in research, it's unreasonable to go back to pretending. In my opinion, the Group of Eight is defrauding taxpayers on a massive scale (p. 79). Dr Spence, while Chair of the Group of Eight, confirmed in 2016 that "excellence" in research is not a priority; his actions confirmed that the claimed devotion to "excellence" is a sham. It's the old "bait and switch": promise "excellence", deliver whatever suits. In this episode, far from "excellence", management is assisting the harmful false exoneration of modern sugar consumption in Australia as a cause of obesity and its related maladies (pp. 79-80, 28 and 64).

At a time when Canberra is seeking savings in taxpayer funding of research, the confirmation that there is no competent, determined quality control in Group of Eight research *when it matters* is important. While research typically is helpful - a "social good" - some is worse than useless - a "social bad" - because it is faulty yet influential and harmful to public health. Further, as argued by journalist Adam Creighton, "Much university research these days arises merely to meet internal targets and receive federal grants, not for its intrinsic value" (see section 6, below). All this suggests that taxpayers have little to fear - in terms of worthwhile knowledge foregone - from large cuts to Group of Eight research budgets. Education Minister Birmingham, please take note.

2. University of Sydney management "jumped the shark" by helping place fake data in big US journal (AJCN)

Notably, Professor Brand-Miller's controversial new paper featuring fake data (p. 78) was written under "**Faculty supervision**", in response to the University's 2014 research-integrity Inquiry (pp. 67-69). Importantly, I had advised the authors, their Charles Perkins Centre and University of Sydney management, and anyone else who would or would not listen, about the issue of unacceptable fake data. **I refer to the FAO and Green Pool data series in Figures 1, 7 and 8, the invalid foundations of which I had carefully documented for management (pp. 34-37).**

Accordingly, I am writing to express my shock and dismay that University of Sydney management actively helped to place fake data on the formal scientific record, via the publication - in March 2017 - of Professor Brand-Miller's new Australian Paradox paper, in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (AJCN; p. 78).

Given management's active involvement and the controversial nature of the long-awaited Australian Paradox "re-write", I'm still shaking my head in amazement. Instead of ensuring the formal retraction of the extraordinarily faulty *Australian Paradox* paper - in line with usual scientific practice (p. 79) - the University's recklessly unreliable scientists and management have chosen to add to another chapter to the Charles Perkins Centre's multi-year episode of blatant scientific fraud. **To an outsider, it appears that:**

- the University suppressed public scrutiny of Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Alan Barclay's long-awaited *Australian Paradox* re-write featuring fake data, unusually using a security guard in the process; then
- the University tried to bully its critic by threatening a campus ban based on malicious false claims; so,
- the University effectively combined its scientific influence and management force to deliver the desired end-result of allowing fake data helpful to its scientists' conference paper and false conclusions - the public scrutiny of which it suppressed - to be placed in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (p.78).

Perhaps there's an innocent explanation for all this? So let's hear it! Until I hear a better explanation, it seems clear to me that by expanding the *Australian Paradox* fraud to include a big-name third journal, the University's senior management is up to its elbows in what might be the best-documented case of serious scientific fraud in the history of Australian universities! (Can you dispute it? Please cite any episode that's more serious.)

3. Key developments over the past five years

A rough timeline of this eye-opening academic, scientific and public-health scandal includes the following:

- Since 2012, Professor Brand-Miller and co-author Dr Alan Barclay (Australian Dietitians Association) have disingenuously defended their faulty *Australian Paradox* "finding" with blatantly false information (p. 28).
- In early 2014, investigative journalist Wendy Carlisle on ABC Radio National's *Background Briefing* confirmed my critique, shredding the credibility of Brand-Miller and Barclay in the process (pp. 30-31).
- In July 2014, the University's formal research-integrity Inquiry ended up a "whitewash", as I feared. Notably, Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay dishonestly advised research-integrity investigator Professor Robert Clark AO (from the University of NSW, a member of the Group of Eight) that the data behind the FAO's faked flat line for 2000-2003 are "robust and meaningful" (pp. 34-35).
- Those running the "Initial Inquiry" - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Jill Trehwella and Professor Clark AO - "disappeared" key evidence, before "exonerating" Brand-Miller and Barclay (p. 35).
- **Since July 2014, I have advised Vice-Chancellor Spence, Professor Garton and the rest of the Academic Board on multiple occasions that the 2014 *Initial Inquiry Report* is factually incorrect on five of its seven of "Preliminary Findings of Fact" (p. 70).**
- In response, the University of Sydney's management has pretended everything is fine. It has avoided ever acknowledging that its *Initial Inquiry Report* is hopelessly wrong, in part because key data were "disappeared", perhaps deliberately. Yes, like the video that now does not exist!
- **Happily, the *Initial Inquiry Report* in July 2014 didn't leave me empty-handed. In fact, Professor Clark AO recommended a (supervised) re-write to properly fix the scientific record: "...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 [Rory Robertson]" (p. 76).**

- In July 2014, Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay publicly agreed to write a new paper, one that "specifically addresses the matters raised in the inquiry" (p. 67). Alas, they have not done so.
- In April 2016, a year ago, journalist Emma Alberici's ABC TV *Lateline* report also confirmed my critique of the extraordinarily faulty *Australian Paradox* paper. While refusing to be interviewed on camera, Professor Brand-Miller did confirm to Alberici that her long-overdue *Australian Paradox* re-write was still in the pipeline: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4442720.htm>
- On 24 May 2016, Professor Brand-Miller delivered a 36-page formal letter of complaint to the ABC about the factual nature of Alberici's *Lateline* report that confirmed (again) my long-standing critique (p. 36).
- On 14 September, the ABC's Audience and Consumer Affairs (A&CA) unit confirmed (yet again) that the *Australian Paradox* paper is dominated by extraordinary errors, and advised Brand-Miller that her detailed complaints about the factual nature of my critique - as presented on *Lateline* - are wrong on all important matters of fact. After receiving that bad news from the A&CA, Brand-Miller and co-author Dr Barclay just pretended nothing happened! Again, the scientific record was left uncorrected (p. 36).
- In my opinion, the University of Sydney's Academic Board should obtain, and take the time to assess, those two documents – the 36-page complaint and A&CA's 15-page response – then instruct Brand-Miller and the e-journal *Nutrients* to formally retract their extraordinarily faulty *Australian Paradox* paper.
- **Late in 2016, Peter FitzSimons - notable because he's a Fellow of the University of Sydney's Senate - devoted most of Chapter 7 of his latest book to explaining the *Australian Paradox* scandal, highlighting how influential but shonky science is working to harm the health of ordinary Australians (pp. 53-63).**
- Six months ago, on 3 November 2016, Professor Brand-Miller presented her new *Australian Paradox* paper featuring fake data at a public conference on campus at the University of Sydney (p. 68).
- Regrettably, Professor Brand-Miller and/or University management cancelled her scheduled Q&A session and then soiled a security guard onto me (a paying customer), so suppressing public scrutiny of the paper before it placed fake sugar data in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (p. 69 and p. 78).
- After the conference, someone dishonest made-up the malicious false claim that I had "attempted to interrupt" Professor Brand-Miller's presentation. Again, all I wanted to do in the Q&A, and then after the security guard showed up, was to ask Brand-Miller why she continues to blatantly ignore the main recommendation of the University's 2014 research-integrity *Initial Inquiry Report*, why she still refuses to "specifically address" my concerns about her reliance on fake data driving her false conclusions.
- In January and February 2017, Vice-Chancellor Spence and Professor Garton threatened to ban me from campus (pp. 69-77). Recall that previously, in 2012, Vice-Chancellor Spence falsely claimed to me that the original *Australian Paradox* paper had been properly "peer-reviewed" before publication (p.79 and p. 24).
- In 2016, Dr Spence, while he was Group of Eight Chair, invented a new rule governing the retraction of research, based on self-serving criteria that flout scientific convention and ignore public harm (p. 79).
- In March 2017, I was profoundly shocked to find that Professor Stephen Simpson - **the Academic Director of the Charles Perkins Centre** - had allowed Professor Brand-Miller to publish fake data in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (p. 78). It was shocking to me to find that Professor Simpson has been part of expanding - rather than fixing - the Charles Perkins Centre's pro-sugar fraud, because back in 2013 I had spoken face-to-face with him in Canberra regarding my concerns about the use of fake flat-line data in the original *Australian Paradox* paper: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/LettersCPCProfSimpson.pdf>
- Also listed as helping Brand-Miller and Barclay to place fake sugar data in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* is Professor Stewart Truswell, since 1978 the most influential author of Canberra's deeply flawed *Australian Dietary Guidelines*; notably, in the 1992 edition, he mistakenly exonerated sugar as a cause of heart disease (p. 97). Finally, Bill Shrapnel, a long-time nutritionist supporter of sugar-industry "science" -<https://www.srasanz.org/sras/-sras-advisors/> - also was thanked by Brand-Miller and Barclay for his help with the AJCN paper (p. 78). That's nice: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/a-spoonful-of-sugar-is-not-so-bad/news-story/1f78f8d76736b77a9abab0363504ccfe>

4. The Charles Perkins Centre, "consultation with the Faculty" and early death in remote Australia

Back in March, the sudden realisation that Professor Brand-Miller and Dr Barclay were not acting alone but "in **consultation with the Faculty**" – that is, under the careful oversight of management - and with helpful assistance from influential friends of the sugar industry, was a bit shocking to me. Security guard? No problem. Ban Rory Robertson from campus? If he shows up again. Fake data in *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*? No problem!

Perhaps the scientists on the Academic Board can explain to their non-scientist colleagues when, exactly, placing fake data on the formal scientific record became acceptable? If so, please let me know too. As I have highlighted for years, I think there are **no** circumstances in which made-up/invented/invalid/pretend/fake data should find their way into formal scientific publications. Again, the invalid foundations of the FAO and Green Pool series are documented on pages 34-37 of my *Five-year Update*.

Importantly, the \$500m Charles Perkins Centre is supposed to be about fixing obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The place is a palace for food scientists “talking the talk”: <https://vimeo.com/99690437> Unfortunately, several of the palatial Charles Perkins Centre’s most-influential nutrition scientists now are on the formal scientific record promoting the blatantly false claim - based on fake data - that modern doses of added sugar have little to do with obesity or related maladies. Even the mice living on campus fed heaps of sugar and other carbohydrates are said to be long-lived; the results for mice simply are extrapolated to humans (p. 89).

Further, can you believe that the Charles Perkins Centre's Professor Jennie Brand-Miller, Dr Alan Barclay – the Australian Dietitians Association’s most influential spokesman - and (also) Professor Stephen Colagiuri - the main author of Canberra's *National Diabetes Strategy 2016-2020* - have combined to sell millions of pop-sci diet books claiming "There is absolute consensus that sugar in food does not cause [type 2] diabetes" (p.84)?

Meanwhile, in the real world, throughout our prosperous coastal cities and all the way inland to remote desert communities similar to those in which Charlie Perkins lived as a boy, real people are dying young in droves because modern doses of added sugar are indeed a major driver of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, amongst other things. In 2016, Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion observed: "I think particularly in remote communities and very remote communities sugar is just killing the population" (p. 6).

5. Some hard questions that need to be asked and answered given the Charles Perkins Centre’s pro-sugar fraud

- Should the extraordinarily faulty *Australian Paradox* paper be formally retracted?
- Is it a problem that there is no competent quality control in research at the Charles Perkins Centre **when it matters** and that the public cannot trust "science" from the University of Sydney?
- Is the *Australian Paradox* scandal increasingly bringing Group of Eight "science" into disrepute, by eroding "the standing of the research community in the eyes of the general public" (p. 80)?
- Should Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence and Professor Stephen Simpson, the Academic Director of the Charles Perkins Centre, be removed from their positions, given their roles in expanding the *Australian Paradox* fraud that falsely exonerates added sugar as a key driver of obesity and related maladies?
- Does it matter that taxpayers cannot trust the University of Sydney and thus the Group of Eight to properly manage billions of dollars’ worth of research funding over coming years (p. 79)?

6. The Australian highlighted Paradox: "Students failed as our bloated university sector takes care of itself"

In a piece in *The Australian* newspaper this week, economics journalist Adam Creighton used the *Australian Paradox* case-study as an example of the lack of proper quality control - and thus wasted taxpayer resources - in Australian universities, especially in the Group of Eight, given its false promises of research “excellence”:

"...*Much university research these days arises merely to meet internal targets and receive federal grants, not for its intrinsic value.* History suggests the most consequential research occurs outside any formal research grant process. At the same time as productivity growth has slowed, the number of academic journals and journal articles has exploded — while the number reading them has collapsed. Australia’s academics contribute far less to public debate than in other countries.

Sydney University is a good example of problems all universities have. With revenues of about \$2bn a year, it received \$708 million in federal government funding in 2015, more than half of it for research. Sydney’s Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence’s total remuneration, which includes use of a house, was just less than \$1.4m in 2015. His seven deputies earned about \$500,000 a year each. Every one of them received a “performance bonus” of up to \$200,000. Surely importing the “bonus” culture that pervades finance is an insult to academic inquiry?

No one doubts these senior people are competent, but must they be paid such sums? Sydney University's annual report teems with disability, LGBTIQ, cultural and linguistic diversity "initiatives". Interestingly, I couldn't find any initiative for attracting students from state schools or working-class families.

As for quality, the university's Charles Perkins Centre has produced an academic paper, *The Australian Paradox*, written by the university's top nutritionist, Jennie Brand-Miller, which finds a negative relationship between Australian obesity and sugar consumption. This has been robustly challenged and roundly criticised and is at odds with the vast bulk of scientific thinking. But the university and relevant journal refused to condemn it. The university, which claims it is devoted to "excellence", says it will only withdraw research if it is formally found to exhibit "research misconduct or unlawfulness". Being of low quality or even wrong doesn't count. ..." <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/adam-creighton/students-failed-as-our-bloated-university-sector-takes-care-of-itself/news-story/f05e0ad2ed93c9396437fd24d066c1fd>

7. Critique of infamous *Australian Paradox* paper has stood the test of time

I encourage intense public scrutiny of my reliability in exposing what I think is a national scandal. Readers, my *Five-year Update* on the *Australian Paradox* fraud will stand the test of time:
<http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Big-5-year-update-Feb-2017.pdf>

Importantly, this is not all about one shonky sugar study. Unfortunately, the *Australian Paradox* fraud is merely the tip of an enormous iceberg of incompetence and worse that has resulted in the harmful mistreatment of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease (CVD), various cancers and probably dementia. That's all.

Importantly, my determined documentation of the Charles Perkins Centre's multi-year scientific fraud is not to get anyone fired. I want the extraordinarily faulty *Australian Paradox* paper retracted, in order to help to fix the mess in modern nutrition "science" that is driving early death across the globe (see Part 8, from page 81).

Finally, please write to me - and correct me - if you think that anything I have written above (or anywhere else) is factually incorrect or otherwise unreasonable. As always, I am prepared to discuss these matters with anyone from the University of Sydney, the Group of Eight, the Federal Government, State governments, public-health entities or the media; indeed, with anyone from anywhere. You can contact me at strathburnstation@gmail.com

Regards,

Rory

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rory robertson

economist and former-fattie

<https://twitter.com/OzParadoxdotcom>

Want to stop trends in your family and friends towards obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and various cancers? Stop eating and drinking sugar: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDaYa0AB8TQ&feature=youtu.be>

Here's the diet advised by Dr Peter Brukner, the Australian cricket team's doctor: <http://www.peterbrukner.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/All-you-need-to-know-about-LCHF1.pdf>

A life in our times: Vale Alexander "Sandy" Robertson (1933-2015): <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/AlecRobertson-born2oct33.pdf>

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