

From: rory robertson <strathburnstation@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 5, 2013 at 5:13 PM

Subject: fyi: Decisive victory in Australian Paradox dispute, celebratory drinks, obesity-reversing diet, and presentation for schoolkids

To: vice.chancellor@sydney.edu.au, dvc.provost@sydney.edu.au, chair.academicboard@sydney.edu.au, stephen.simpson@sydney.edu.au, Michael.Spence@sydney.edu.au, Stephen.Garton@sydney.edu.au, Derrick.Armstrong@sydney.edu.au, Shane.Houston@sydney.edu.au, John.Hearn@sydney.edu.au, Jill.Trewhella@sydney.edu.au, Ann.Brewer@sydney.edu.au, Gwynnyth.Llewellyn@sydney.edu.au, Kathryn.Refshauge@sydney.edu.au, Chris.Peck@sydney.edu.au, Bruce.Robinson@sydney.edu.au, Jill.White@sydney.edu.au, debbie.bowman@sydney.edu.au, tim.payne@sydney.edu.au, andrew.potter@sydney.edu.au, rebecca.murray@sydney.edu.au, jane.oakeshott@sydney.edu.au, meryl.bradford@sydney.edu.au, vc.admin@sydney.edu.au, kim.bellanderson@sydney.edu.au, helen.agus@sydney.edu.au, tony.weiss@sydney.edu.au, a.weiss@usyd.edu.au, soumela.amanatidis@sydney.edu.au, margaret.allmanfarinelli@sydney.edu.au, iain.campbell@sydney.edu.au, dee.carter@sydney.edu.au, ian.caterson@sydney.edu.au, charles.collyer@sydney.edu.au, arthur.conigrave@sydney.edu.au, stuart.cordwell@sydney.edu.au, ben.crossett@sydney.edu.au, gareth.denyer@sydney.edu.au, tom.ferenci@sydney.edu.au, k.downard@sydney.edu.au, mitchell.guss@sydney.edu.au, vanessa.gysbers@sydney.edu.au, ruth.hall@sydney.edu.au, dale.hancock@sydney.edu.au, hush_n@chem.usyd.edu.au, noel.hush@sydney.edu.au, jill.johnston@sydney.edu.au, katherine.jukic@sydney.edu.au, philip.kuchel@sydney.edu.au, vincy.li@sydney.edu.au, tim.newsome@sydney.edu.au, kieron.rooney@sydney.edu.au, margaret.nicholson@sydney.edu.au, hannah.nicholas@sydney.edu.au, anna.rangan@sydney.edu.au, reeves@angis.usyd.edu.au, peter.reeves@sydney.edu.au, margaret.sunde@sydney.edu.au, s.truswell@mmb.usyd.edu.au, peter.waterhouse@usyd.edu.au, peter.waterhouse@sydney.edu.au, sean.h.adams@ars.usda.gov, jib_anderson@unc.edu, enrico.bignetti@unipr.it, jeffrey.blumberg@tufts.edu, d.cameron-smith@auckland.ac.nz, francesco.capozzi@unibo.it, karenc@uow.edu.au, fdunsha@unimelb.edu.au, wcraig@andrews.edu, vflood@uow.edu.au, faye@cirad.fr, haub@ksu.edu, bengt.jeppsson@med.lu.se, kmecklin@uoguelph.ca, kuhlensc@illinois.edu, leidyh@missouri.edu, mjplemay@gmail.com, rbmcdonald@ucdavis.edu, bmeyer@uow.edu.au, goran.molin@appliednutrition.lth.se, k.pentieva@ulster.ac.uk, caryl.nowson@deakin.edu.au, pribis@andrews.edu, samir.samman@sydney.edu.au, andrew@scholeylab.com, song@msu.edu, jj.strain@ulster.ac.uk, james.swain@case.edu, tamurat@uab.edu, teranmd@illinois.edu, ustunol@anr.msu.edu, sv98@columbia.edu, wendy.ward@utoronto.ca, m.westerterp@hb.unimaas.nl, susan.whiting@usask.ca, l.williams@rowett.ac.uk, zile@msu.edu, nutrients@mdpi.com

Good afternoon,

The discussion below also is provided in PDF form (attached).

Monday 18 February 2013 brought a decisive win in Australia's "sugar wars":

- The Australian Government – via the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) - toughened official dietary advice against added sugar: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-02-19/sugar-re-think-an-evidence-based-decision/4527312?section=business> (Note the reference to "academics" near the 1-minute mark.)
- What was left of the pro-sugar University of Sydney's credibility in nutrition science was shredded: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/canberradietary.pdf>

For the record, the detail of my *Australian Paradox* dispute with the University of Sydney and the decisive nature of the victory are detailed below.

As the dispute winds down, I'm providing three new Resources: (i) a proven obesity-reversing diet; (ii) an example of a schoolkid's talk on the 2013 *Australian Dietary Guidelines*; and (iii) correspondence revealing that the FAO's Australian sugar series was falsified for the 2000s, after the ABS sugar series was discontinued as unreliable beyond 1998-99. Perhaps forward these resources to anyone you think might be interested.

Again, the Australian Government two weeks ago toughened its dietary advice against foods and drinks containing added sugar. My 7-year-old son's class talk (see the link below) highlights the fact that, for the first time, Canberra's advice for improved health is that we "limit" our consumption of sugary foods and drinks, in the same way as we long have been advised to "limit" our intake of alcohol via beer and wine.

It would be good if Australia's kids were exposed to these new official *Guidelines* in their schools. To provide encouragement, **I will donate a book - *Good Calories, Bad Calories, the best history of nutrition science available - for each of the first 500 class presentations on this topic.*** Just send (i) details of the school, class, etc; and (ii) a stamped (for a weight of 900 grams) self-addressed A4 envelope to "Rory Robertson, C/- P.O. Paddington, NSW, 2021".

To mark a decisive victory in the *Australian Paradox* dispute - and my latest birthday - **all are welcome at Ryan's Bar at Australia Square in Sydney on one or both of the next two Thursdays - 7 March (warmup)**

and 14 March (main event), from 5.30pm. The secret pass-words on arrival at <http://www.ryansbar.com.au/> are "peer reviewed" followed by "Australian Paradox"!

rgds,
rory

GAME, SET AND MATCH IN THE AUSTRALIAN PARADOX SCANDAL

x Extraordinarily, the University of Sydney's highest-profile nutritionists opposed the Australian Government's toughening of official dietary advice against added sugar: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/a-spoonful-of-sugar-is-not-so-bad/story-e6frg8y6-1226090126776>

x My year-long dispute with the University of Sydney began when I "solved" the "Australian Paradox". Not that it was hard: the so-called "paradox" - "**Australians have been eating less and less sugar, and obesity rates have been increasing**" - fell over as soon as basic scrutiny was applied to the underlying facts (see the next link).

x Along the way, I presented my "Australian Paradox goes to Canberra" chartset at the *Discussion on The place of sugar in Australia's Dietary Intake Guidelines in Parliament House, Canberra - 29 October 2012*: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf> .

x Yes, I objected strongly to the ridiculously faulty *Australian Paradox* paper – **(self) published in the pay-as-you-publish E-journal *Nutrients* but carrying the University of Sydney's stamp of scientific credibility** - being used as an intellectual spearhead by those seeking to kill the proposed toughening of official nutrition advice against added sugar: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html>

x Importantly, as an economist, my dispute with the University of Sydney at its core was not about science nor about nutrition, it was about simple things like up versus down, valid versus invalid datasets and the need to correct serious errors in the public debate.

x In particular, my objection was that the paper falsely exonerated sugar as a menace to public health via its "peer reviewed" yet obviously false claim of "**a consistent and substantial decline**" in Australian per-capita consumption of (added) sugar "**over the past 30 years**", so "**an inverse relationship**" between the consumption of sugar and obesity, from 1980 to 2010.

x Bizarrely, the overconfident University of Sydney authors - **Dr Alan Barclay and Professor Jennie Brand-Miller** - apparently failed to notice that their four - four! - valid measures of per-capita sugar consumption - in their own published charts - trended **up** not down in the 1980-2010 timeframe (Slides 13-17 in the Canberra link above).

x Moreover, the University of Sydney's unreliable scientists **somehow failed to notice – or, at least, to note** - the fact that the key Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) sugar series on which their (false) *Australian Paradox* "finding" is based was, in turn, based on an Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) series that was discontinued as unreliable by the ABS after 1998-99, over a decade before their faulty paper was (self) published (Slides 4, 21 and 22 in the link above).

x Notably, Australia's only widely trusted nutritionist - **Dr Rosemary Stanton of the University of NSW** - has confirmed the basis of my claim that the *Australian Paradox* paper is an academic disgrace: "And yes, I agree with you [Rory] that we have no evidence that sugar consumption in Australia has fallen. A walk around any supermarket shows that huge numbers of foods contain sugar. I argue this point frequently with colleagues"; "I have many objections to that particular paper and to the idea that sugar is not a problem"; and "I have expressed my opinion about the paper to the authors ... I will almost certainly cite it at some stage as an example of something I consider to be incorrect" (Slide 18 in the link above).

X Accordingly, no-one came close to collecting the **\$40,000 cash on offer in my Australian Paradox Challenge** (Slide 6)

X Now, while the *Australian Paradox* paper still is an **academic disgrace**, in my opinion, the good news is that it no longer is a menace to public health. Official nutrition advice against added sugar has been toughened by the NHMRC, and the *Australian Paradox* paper is left chopped up in little pieces - completely discredited - awaiting correction or retraction by either its lead author or the "Guest Editor" of the publishing journal. (Yes, they are the same person!)

Beware of bizarre flat lines – Not so much a "paradox" as an obvious problem with the critical data series

x Amusingly, **the FAO's Australian sugar series** now "exists" for the entire 2000s, with "estimates" simply made up on the basis of nothing credible, apparently in an effort to avoid putting "Not available" in the relevant cells of the FAO's now-compromised global dataset. Yes, the FAO's Australian sugar series for the 2000s appears to have been falsified, in that the FAO pretends publicly that it used a sophisticated methodology in the estimation process, when in reality it

basically assumed a flattish series of ridiculously low "estimates" (see final chart in <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf>).

x **It is that falsified FAO sugar series that conspicuously "flat lined" in the obviously faulty *Australian Paradox* paper** (Canberra Slides 21 and 22). I'm not saying the authors of *Australian Paradox* falsified the key sugar series. I'm saying that the authors of *Australian Paradox* were unreasonably oblivious - and insufficiently curious - about the strange flat line that featured in their key chart. Instead of asking "I wonder where this obviously faulty Australian sugar series came from?", they simply rushed off to publish and promote their silly claim of an "Australian Paradox". In life, myriad issues will appear puzzling – even a "paradox" - if no-one bothers to take 10 minutes to seek out the underlying facts.

x It is unclear why **University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence and his Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Dr Jill Trehwella** each chose to offer unqualified support for an obviously false scientific "finding" that is based on a data series discontinued as unreliable by the ABS and then falsified by the FAO. After all, it's widely - but not universally - understood that it is not okay to (self) publish a formal paper credulously claiming a scientific "finding" that is based on key series that was discontinued as unreliable, and then falsified as bizarrely flat (see previous chart and <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/SydneyUniVC%20LETTER070612.pdf> ; <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sept2012-Conversations.pdf>).

x Disturbingly, the University of Sydney authors' **unreasonably determined defence** of their obviously faulty *Australian Paradox* paper has morphed from clownish into something more serious and "unsettling": the use of obviously false information to defend their mistaken "finding" of "an inverse relationship" between sugar consumption and obesity: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/pesky-economist-wont-let-big-sugar-lie-20120725-22pru.html> and <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/JBM-AWB-AustralianParadox.pdf>

x Many thanks to champion journalist Michael Pascoe for his efforts on the "Australian Paradox" dispute. Perhaps he has a final punchy piece on it in him. Regardless, various other journalists now also are well aware that the University of Sydney seems to be **struggling to balance its (i) desire to maintain a high standard of academic and scientific integrity in its research; against (ii) its desire to maintain and grow revenue at the University's pro-sugar Glycemic Index (GI) enterprise to which its *Australian Paradox* authors are devoted** (pp. 10-11 at <http://www.gisymbol.com/cmsAdmin/uploads/Glycemic-Index-Foundation-Healthy-Choices-Brochure.pdf>).

Getting healthier dietary advice to parents and kids

x As highlighted above, Canberra's recent toughening of dietary advice against added sugar publicly shredded any remaining credibility of the pro-sugar University of Sydney on this *Australian Paradox* matter : <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/canberradietary.pdf>

x In particular, **NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson** explained very clearly on ABC television that the new, tougher advice against added sugar reflects increasingly clear evidence linking elevated consumption of added sugar to increased obesity, in both adults and children. That is, added sugar and obesity have an association that is **positive** in nature - surprise, surprise: more sugar means more obesity - not "an **inverse** relationship", as still falsely claimed by the University of Sydney: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-02-19/sugar-re-think-an-evidence-based-decision/4527312?section=business>

x Interestingly, the NHMRC in its *Australian Dietary Guidelines* also felt the need to go out of its way to take an axe to the **credibility of the University of Sydney's low-GI diet**: "Glycaemic index: The US review found strong and consistent evidence that glycaemic index and/or glycaemic load are not associated with body weight and that modifying either of these does not lead to greater weight loss or better weight management. [footnote 198; http://www.nutritionevidencelibrary.com/evidence.cfm?evidence_summary_id=250378] There is considerable variability in these indices, depending on inter-and intra-individual factors and the form of food (including the degree of processing, stage of ripeness, cooking and cooling times), which may limit practical application.[footnote 199] These factors were not included in the literature review to inform the revision of these Guidelines". (p. 20 of http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n55_australian_dietary_guidelines_0.pdf)

x Beyond *Australian Paradox's* completely discredited exoneration of added sugar as a key driver of obesity, **Dr Alan Barclay and Professor Jennie Brand-Miller promote another spectacularly false claim in their big-selling low-GI diet books: "There is absolute consensus that sugar in food does not cause diabetes"**. There is "absolute consensus" yet debate rages all around?

x **In fact, there is growing evidence that excess consumption of added sugar also is a key driver of Type-2 diabetes:** <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/27/its-the-sugar-folks/?ref=markbittman>

x Importantly, **note that none of the co-authors** of that Sugar-drives-diabetes paper - <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0057873> - operated as "Guest Editor" of

the publishing journal. As many readers are aware, that's a very important first step towards credible quality control, a step not all authors choose to take: http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special_issues/carbohydrates

x **In my 7-year-old son's talk to his Year-3 classmates**, Robertson junior highlighted the new scientific evidence behind Canberra's 2013 *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. Now - for the first time – Canberra is advising kids and adults to "limit" our consumption of added sugar, in the same way adults long have been encouraged to "limit" consumption of alcohol in beer and wine, etc. Please forward this educational resource to any parents, teachers or children you think might be interested - and encourage them to "cut and paste" as they please: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/talktoyear3boys.pdf>

x **It would be good if Australia's kids were exposed to the new *Australian Dietary Guidelines* in their schools.** To provide encouragement, as I noted above, I will donate a book - *Good Calories, Bad Calories*, the best history of nutrition science available (see p. 10 of the previous link) - for each of the first 500 class talks on this topic. Just send (i) details of the school, class, etc; and (ii) a stamped (for a weight of 900 grams) self-addressed A4 envelope to "Rory Robertson, C/- P.O. Paddington, NSW, 2021".

x **The really good news is that obesity and T2-diabetes can be reversed in many/most cases.** For those who know someone struggling with obesity, I have attached a scientifically approved - and proven - **obesity-reversing diet**. Perhaps forward it to anyone struggling who you think it might help: <http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/why-we-get-fat.pdf>

Where are we left?

x The *Australian Paradox* scandal - involving disturbing carelessness or worse at the highest levels of "Group of Eight" science in Australia - has been a fascinating episode in part because "**Big Sugar**" **set out in the 1950s in the US to scramble and mislead science on the links between modern sugar consumption and chronic diseases**. That global strategy has been very successful; indeed, along the way Harvard University in the 1960s and 1970s became America's "most public defender" of "modern sugar consumption" as harmless, its "science" reportedly corrupted by heavy funding from the sugar and sugary food industries: <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2012/10/sugar-industry-lies-campaign>

x **What is going on today at the embarrassingly pro-sugar University of Sydney - with its pro-sugar scientists, its pro-sugar low-GI business and its management's unqualified support for the hopelessly discredited pro-sugar *Australian Paradox* paper - remains unclear.** It will be interesting to see if Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence - or the University Senate - chooses at some point to reintroduce scientific integrity as something to be regarded as a priority. Until then - with no real quality control over the nonsense some of its scientists promote as fact in the public debate - research produced at the University of Sydney should not be taken seriously until after key "findings" have been double-checked by independent and competent outsiders.

x **That's it. All done for now. Thanks for your patience with me over the past year.** For further detail on these matters, try www.australianparadox.com or <http://www.australianparadox.com/part-2>

x **Maybe see you at Ryan's Bar this Thursday and/or next Thursday.**

strathburnstation@gmail.com - Comments, criticisms, compliments, whatever are welcome

--

rory robertson
economist and former-fattie
now fairly fructose free! 😊

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>

Please email "Please delete" if you would prefer not to receive these occasional updates on public-health matters