



Society for Reproductive Biology

Newsletter No 53 February 2005

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President

Lois Salamonsen

Happy New Year to all SRB members. As we enter a new year, it is anticipated that many of you will be preparing work for presentation at our Annual Meeting in early September. The new Conference Centre in Perth is said to be a wonderful venue, right in the centre of Perth and we look forward to seeing you all there. I have had considerable positive feedback on the excellent program provided for you at the last meeting in Sydney and Sarah Robertson along with members of the Program Organising Committee is again putting together a program that we are sure will hold interest for all of you. Furthermore, the competition within the airline industry, means that it is no longer expensive to travel to Perth. Please encourage your students to attend: incentives provided by the Perth centre will ensure that the Society is able to provide good travel awards for all bona-fide students. The Local Organising committee, chaired by Bu Yeap, with Dominique Blache and Peter Mark as SRB representatives, is also putting together a Social program that I trust you will all support and enjoy.

In November 2004, the SRB held a very successful symposium in conjunction with the AHMRC: a detailed report on this is provided within this newsletter. I particularly want to thank the committee who organized this: Chris O'Neill, Jeremy Thompson and Emma Whitelaw for their effort in putting together such a stimulating program. Such events certainly raise the profile of our Society within the greater scientific community.

Graeme Martin has set up an excellent new linkage for SRB with the Japanese Society of Animal Production. They are holding their 2005 meeting in on 15-17 September 2005, and hope to include several SRB members on the program. Anybody with interest in attending this meeting should contact Graeme (gmartin@agric.uwa.edu.au) or Hiroya Kadokawa (hiroya@affrc.go.jp).

Your committee has been working hard since the AGM to advance the Society in a number of ways; strengthening our membership base by following up on all non-financial members and seeking new members, addressing areas of publicity and above all, getting the databases of members into order so that we are sure you all receive communications that may be of interest to you.

Lobbying parliamentarians is of considerable importance for science, and FASTs have again organized a day whereby "Science meets Parliament". Two of our younger committee members, Darryl Russell and Marie Pantaleon will be attending to represent the Society. The theme this year is Health and Ageing, and we have put forward through the FASTs secretariat headed by Bradley Smith, an outline of how Reproductive Health interfaces with Ageing. Darryl and Marie will report to members on this important event. We hope in future years, to make this opportunity available to more of our upcoming young scientists.

Those of you submitting grants through NH&MRC this year, will be delighted to hear that Reproduction is now to be represented in a Grant Review Panel separate from Endocrinology, and shared with Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Pediatrics. However, the more endocrine aspects of Reproduction will still go through the Endocrine panel. It is to be hoped that scrutiny by committees with greater focus and with additional representation from our discipline, will improve the success rate for grants in our field. It is also encouraging that Australians are now eligible for international funding for highly collaborative interdisciplinary research within the Frontiers in Bioscience Program: (www.hfsp.org/home.php).

We have had an unexpected disruption in our secretariat services, due to ACTS being taken over by ICMS, who were willing only to continue providing services to us if we also used them as our meeting organizers. They provided virtually no notification to us of this. Fortunately, as reported to you at the last AGM, our Treasurer, Kate Loveland had already been in discussion with other potential secretariats and had obtained quotes from them: Mike Pickford at ASN had provided the most attractive proposition and therefore we were quickly able to enlist his services. We believe that overall ASN will provide a much improved secretariat facility that will include appropriate on-line payment of subscriptions and accurate maintenance of our membership database. We regret that this decision could not be taken to the AGM for ratification: rapid decision was forced on the committee if we were not to be left without a secretariat.

Your journal, Reproduction Fertility and Development, now has a new editor, Sharon Mortimer, who brings considerable expertise and enthusiasm to the journal and from her base in the USA, hopes to extend the contributors and breadth of the journal. I encourage you to send your manuscripts to our journal and help raise its impact factor.

I look forward to seeing you all and hearing of your exciting new work in Perth.

Lois Salamonsen

Program Organising Committee Chair

Sarah Robertson

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

2005 SRB Annual Scientific Conference

to be held in conjunction with the ESA
4-7 September 2005
at the

Perth Convention Exhibition Centre

Highlights will include:

- Founder's Lecture: John Eppig
- MLA Plenary Lecture: Ken McNatty
- SRB New Investigator Award
- MLA Award
- ANZPRA New Investigator Award
- SRB-ESA joint symposium
- Free communications

PROVISIONAL SYMPOSIUM TOPICS:

- Healthy start to life: pregnancy and parturition
- Molecular communication in the ovary and testes
- New frontiers in reproductive biotechnology and cloning
- Cell fate: decision-making in cell proliferation and differentiation
- SRB-ESA joint symposium: The genome – environment interaction in life course trajectory

Website: <http://www.ESA-SRB.org.au>

IMPORTANT DATES 2005

1 March - Registration and Accommodation Bookings Open

9 May - Closing Date for Abstract Submissions

Local Organising Committee Chair

Dominique Blache

The 2005 SRB Annual conference will be joint meeting with Endocrine Society of Australia (ESA) at the brand new Perth Convention Centre from Sunday 4 to Wednesday 7 September. The Perth Convention Centre offers not only impressive facilities, it is located less than 5 minutes walk from the city centre and less than 10 minutes walk from all the hotels that are offering discount to the delegates. Last but not least, the view of the Swan River from the PCC is breathtaking.

The 2005 LOC has carefully considered delegates' comments collected at the 2004 meeting and student delegates will be delighted by the following good news. A generous grant from the Western Australian Government will be used to offer travel grants to support students. The "Student and Supervisor Mixer BBQ", formerly known as "student BBQ", has been made very affordable this year.

The last version of the budget was also very promising. Because of a strong and early response from the sponsors, thanks to Mike Pickford's hard work, the registration fees will be kept the same as last year. We are now finalising registration details and venues for the social events.

Full details will be shortly available online at <http://www.esa-srb.org.au/>

A poster announcing the SRB 2005 meeting has been prepared and will be sent to SRB contacts all over the country in the next few weeks. Also, the SRB/ESA meeting has been advertised in *Hormone Research*, *Neuroendocrinology* and *Nature* in an attempt to boost international participation. Representatives of the Japanese Society of Animal Reproduction (<http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/jsar/index.html>) have expressed their interest in joining the conference and have invited Australian scientists to attend their annual meeting to be held on 15-17 September 2005, at Shizuoka University, Japan.

The 2005 LOC looks forward to welcoming you to Perth for the 2005 edition of the SRB annual meeting - it will be the perfect mix of scientific and social events for all delegates.

Future SRB Scientific Meetings

2006 Gold Coast jointly with ESA, 20-23 August

Treasurer

Kate Loveland

In anticipation of the need to improve and extend services offered to the SRB membership, the SRB Committee undertook a call for tenders in 2004 for the Secretariat services required to sustain and run our Society. With the objective of moving to online services for membership renewals and information access, we obtained a highly attractive quote from Australian Science Network Pty, Ltd, the company that has been functioning as the Secretariat of our annual scientific conferences since 2001. Under the guidance of Mike Pickford, the SRB conferences have returned substantial profits to our Society during the past four years. In addition, the level of support and professionalism of our conferences has escalated greatly, due to the continued and excellent service provided by the ASN team. The SRB Council viewed this tender from ASN as a highly cost effective and desirable improvement on the services currently provided to the Society's members.

Due to recent changes at ACTS, our Society's Secretariat during the previous five (or so) years, ACTS is no longer able to serve as our Society secretariat. The changeover to ASN that the Committee had anticipated has been initiated, effective immediately.

As of this month, SRB Society services will be moving from ACTS to ASN. We have every reason to expect a smooth transition, particularly with the able contributions of Michael New of ACTS, who has personally delivered thoughtful and thorough care of SRB business for several years.

You will notice that your renewal notice requests that your payment for your 2005 subscription renewal is sent directly to ASN. There is a higher cost per member for service provision through ASN, but the potential impact on membership fees will be discussed with members before there is any change in the annual subscription.

SRB Symposium - AHMRC 2004 Report

Melinda Jasper Chris O'Neill & Sarah Robertson

SRB sponsored a symposium at The Australian Health & Medical Research Congress held at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre late last year. The one day symposium: Influences of Gametes and Embryos on Health and Disease on Thursday, 25th November 2004 featured key national and international researchers discussing aspects of epigenetic programming in early life, with a focus on the implications for human health. The morning session centred on the molecular mechanisms of DNA methylation and imprinting, as well as the influence of artificial reproductive technologies on these events. Discussions in the afternoon highlighted the potential applications of mathematical models using 'virtual' embryos, and the use of animal model systems to determine the longer term consequences of environment-driven epigenetic modifications in gametes and embryos, that may predispose to disease and compromised health in adult life. The symposium was well attended by Society members, but also drew attention from the wider medical research community to the Society's activities and interests, and to the significance of reproductive events in impacting human quality of life.

Congratulations and thanks go to the program convenor Chris O'Neill for his efforts in organising the symposium and achieving a highly successful event for the society.

Recent Awards

Australian Scientist Wins Top UK Award in Hormone Research

Australian scientist Professor Jock Findlay AM has been awarded the 2006 UK Society for Endocrinology Dale Medal.

The medal is the highest accolade bestowed by the Society and acknowledges excellence in hormone research. Professor Findlay is one of only five Australians to have ever won the award. The medal is awarded in recognition of outstanding studies which have changed our understanding of endocrinology in a fundamental way.

Professor Findlay was acknowledged for his contribution to reproductive health research, and in particular, a better understanding of the ovary, leading to improved knowledge of fertility and treating infertility in women.

"This award is not only a great honour for me, but also for Australia, for pioneering research into reproductive health," said Professor Findlay, Deputy Director of Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research in Clayton, Victoria.

"It is fantastic to know my research has been recognised and is helping the treatment of infertile couples and the development of better contraceptives," he said.

Professor Findlay has worked in this field for more than 30 years and was one of the original collaborators on the first paper on hormone replacement in women receiving IVF (in vitro fertilisation) treatment. He has served on a number of advisory committees for the Reproductive Health and Research Department of World Health Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland and ultimately was Chair of the WHO Scientific and Technical Advisory Group on Reproductive Health.

In 2001, Professor Findlay was recognised in Australia for his contributions by being made a Member of the Order of Australia.

He is currently Chairperson of the Infertility Treatment Authority of Victoria, and Chair of the National Health and Medical Research Council Embryo Research Licensing Committee. He is also a National Health and Medical Research Council Fellow and receives substantial support from the Federal Government.

At present, Professor Findlay's research centres on the hormonal control of egg development in the ovary which has applications in understanding ovulation, the regulation of the lifetime of eggs which determines the length of fertility, and the time of the menopause. He is also collaborating with other scientists at Prince Henry's Institute on a project investigating new methods of contraception.

2005 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science are now open for nominations

Closing date: Friday, 8 April 2005

DEST are seeking nominations to any of the following five awards:

- The Prime Minister's Prize for Science
- Science Minister's Prize for Life Scientist of the Year

- Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year
- Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools
- Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools

Contact Information:

Science Prizes Secretariat, Department of Education,
Science and Training
Tel: (02) 6240 5066, Fax: (02) 6123 6168
email: pmprize@dest.gov.au
<https://sciencegrants.dest.gov.au/scienceprize/pages/home.aspx>

Conference Announcements

1. North American Testis Workshop
Theme: Testicular Cell Dynamics and Endocrine Signaling
Seattle, Washington, March 28 - April 2, 2005
<http://andrology.popcouncil.org/testis/>
2. International Conference on Gonadotropins and Receptors
University of Georgia, Athens, GA, USA April 13-17, 2005
www.bmb.uga.edu/icgr
3. SSF
Warwick University, UK 3-6 April 2005
<http://www.srf-reproduction.org/events/>
4. 6th International Symposium on Preimplantation Genetics
London, England 19-21 May 2005
www.pgdondon.org
5. 38th SSR Annual Meeting
Quebec City, Quebec, Canada July 24-27, 2005
<http://www.ssr.org/Meetings.html>
6. International Gap Junction Conference
Whistler, Canada August 13-18, 2005
<http://www.gapjunctionconference.org/>
7. Japanese Society of Animal Production
15-17 September 2005
<http://www.soc.nii.ac.jp/jsar/index.html>
Contact Graeme (gmartin@agric.uwa.edu.au) or Hiroya Kadokawa (hiroya@affrc.go.jp)
8. XVIII FIGO World Congress of Gynecology & Obstetrics
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, November 5-10 2006
www.figo2006kl.com
9. Combined Scientific Meeting of the Australian Stem Cell Centre and Flow Cytometry Association.
Stem Cells in the Age of Fluorescence Technology: the 2005 ISAC* Samuel A. Latt Conference
Gold Coast 6-9th November 2005
<http://www.asnevents.net.au/stemcells/>
10. 3rd International Congress on Developmental Origins of Health and Disease.
Toronto, Canada Nov 16-20 2005
<http://www.dohadsoc.org/>
11. **The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) 44th National Scientific Conference 2005 Hormones, Fertility and Cancer**
20-23 Nov
The ASMR NSC for 2005 will be focussed on the areas of fertility and reproductive/hormone-dependent cancer, and

will be held at Couran Cove Resort, QLD, on November 20-23. This unique island resort is a particularly beautiful and isolated venue, which will allow maximal networking and interaction between participants. The structure of the meeting will be modelled on the Gordon style of scientific conference pioneered in the USA, with a strong emphasis on high quality science, discussion and registrant participation, while maintaining the ASMR's priority for development of early-career scientists.

For further information, please contact the conference Convenor, Dr Lisa Butler lisa.butler@imvs.sa.gov.au or Deputy Convenor, Dr Moira O'Bryan moira.obryan@med.monash.edu.au
<http://www.asmr-nsc.org.au>

12. Japanese Society of Reproductive Immunology
Osaka, Dec 1-3 2005

13. 6th International Congress of Neuroendocrinology
The International Neuroendocrine Federation 6th
Pittsburgh, USA, June 19-22, 2006
<http://ccehs.upmc.edu/course2/187b/>

14. 7th International Symposium on Reproduction in Domestic Ruminants (RRS 2006)
Wellington, New Zealand 13-17 Aug 2006
This meeting will precede the Australian Society of Reproductive Biology's annual meeting in Australia between 20-23rd August 2006

15. International meeting: ECM of the Female Reproductive Tract
Hawaii Nov 11-13 2006
Aust contact, Lois Salamonsen

RFD

Sharon Mortimer

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who made the time to meet with me when I was in Australia in December 2004. It was a whirlwind week or so, with stops in Melbourne, Adelaide, Newcastle, and Sydney. I am very grateful for all the ideas that were shared so freely, and for the great enthusiasm for RFD that everyone showed. In these meetings, there were a few points that were raised consistently, and I would like to cover them again, here.

- While we consider manuscripts which cover topics from gametogenesis to parturition, and also their long-term sequelae (e.g. fetal determinants of disease, effects of pre-term birth, etc.) we remain a scientific journal, so we do not consider manuscripts that report high-order clinical endocrinology, gynaecology, or obstetrics studies or public health or epidemiology studies.
- To preserve the Journal's strengths of publishing good science covering a wide range of topics, I would like to confirm that RFD does encourage the submission of descriptive and comparative original research that is either hypothesis-driven, or that provides significant information which can be used in the formulation of a hypothesis.
- In addition, we also encourage the submission of critical review articles on topics of relevance to the field of reproductive biology.

- We are moving to on-line submissions this year, which will streamline the reviewing process. We are aiming to minimize the time to first decision, as we recognize that this is crucial to authors.
- As always, the manuscripts are reviewed by two independent referees. The referees are selected based on the field of study, and they are from all over the world.

Finally, RFD is being promoted internationally, but it is still an Australian-based journal, and the journal of the SRB. Please consider it when you are deciding where to send your next paper.

I look forward to speaking with many of you in person at the SRB meeting in Perth, but I would be happy to receive any ideas, or answer any queries you might have, by e-mail in the meantime.

Sharon Mortimer
Editor
Reproduction, Fertility and Development

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Position Announcements

Dairy Industry Research

Dairy Australia has provided scholarship funding (up to \$27,000 non-taxable) for a suitably qualified student to undertake a research project within the Dairy Cattle Fertility Group at the University of Melbourne. The project will investigate the hypothesis that the exceptionally low concentrations of insulin and IGF-I in Holstein cows in early lactation are associated with altered uterine secretions that inadequately support late embryo growth and placentation. This results in about 20% of embryos present at Day 20 failing to complete implantation by Day 35. Since pregnancy recognition has been completed, embryo death is not associated with a release of PGF and the cow may fail to display oestrus for a further 3 to 12 weeks. Prospective students would need to have had final year subjects that included substantial components of reproductive physiology and endocrinology. Experience in working with cattle is desirable but not essential.

Further information can be obtained from Prof. Jock Macmillan k.macmillan@unimelb.edu.au

Career Opportunities for Senior Biomedical Researchers in Australia

Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research is a world leader in the fields of endocrinology and reproduction. The Institute is closely affiliated with Monash University and is located at the Monash Medical Centre in Melbourne. We are expanding our facilities and are in the position to bring to the Institute up to 3 new research groups. Accordingly we are seeking to recruit dynamic researchers with established track records in basic and/or clinical research.

Areas of particular interest to the Institute are: women's and men's reproductive health, cancers of the reproductive system, neuro- and cardiovascular endocrinology and diabetes/obesity, although these are not exclusive. We would expect successful applicants to bring with them state-of-the-art technologies appropriate to their areas of expertise. The Institute will offer an attractive resettlement package and start-up research support to qualified individuals.

Opportunities for joint appointments exist with the University and Southern Health.

Closing date: Friday 29th April 2005

Enquiries should be addressed to:

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Communications

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