



# The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society for Reproductive Biology

## FEATURE RELEASE

Monday August 21, 2006  
The Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre

### Plenary Speaker:

#### Professor John Mattick - "Your genes - Trash or Treasure"

It has long been thought that many genes that make up the human genome are 'junk'-only a small amount of the 35,000 genes actually do anything! But Professor Mattick will present new data to the contrary, that these genes are not junk but unassuming genes that play an important role in directing the course of cell development by controlling the structure and function of our DNA. *Professor Mattick* is the Director of the Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland.

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES!

#### Abstracts available on request

**ONE SMART MOLECULE: Helps make babies and combats HIV?** – A new protein has been discovered that is important for a fertilized egg to stick to lining of the uterus. But there's more! - it may also be used by the HIV virus to infect humans. So blocking this molecule could be an effective contraceptive and also prevent HIV infection. *Dr Nie* Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research, Melbourne

**CLEVER SPERM- ECHIDNAS DO IT BETTER?** - *Dr Johnston* from the University of Queensland has found a very unusual form of behaviour that has never been described in mammals. One side of the echidna's penis shuts down during ejaculation and the other side creates "sperm bundles", much like what happens in reptiles. And sperm bundled together can swim much faster than lone sperm, giving males that bundle the best a better chance of fertilising an egg.

**ARE YOU LIKELY TO HAVE TWINS?** Australia already has 120,000 sets of twins, and twin births are on the increase. *Dr Montgomery* from Queensland Institute of Medical Research has new data that could predict a woman's likelihood of having double trouble or twice as nice. If you have a particular version of a protein called GDF-9, it increases the likelihood of you having non-identical twins.

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