



# Society for Reproductive Biology

Newsletter No 56 November 2006

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## President

***Michael Holland***

This is my first opportunity to write to you all as the incoming President of the SRB. I first attended the then (A)SRB as a first year PhD student in 1975. I recall being most impressed by the quality of work presented and the rigorous, often vigorous, debate which accompanied some papers. I was delighted to see that at our recent meeting at the Gold Coast this tradition continued although there seems now a greater "politeness" about some of the questioning! We are fortunate that we have such a strong, proud tradition in the very many different research topics which fall under the umbrella of reproductive biology. We need to actively guard and maintain this tradition.

This brings me to the first of the two points I want to make in this newsletter. The proliferation of scientific societies which has occurred since my first SRB meeting has meant that there are many opportunities for you all to present your research and also that you must constantly make choices about which meetings you can attend. For SRB to remain THE forum for you to present work we must ensure that our meetings are well organized, highly relevant and of a high standard. This is the responsibility of all of us, not merely the Program Committee. We must use SRB as the showcase for our research and for our discipline. Reproduction overlaps with so many other key disciplines such as developmental biology, stem cell biology, agricultural biotechnology etc. as well as our traditional partner in endocrinology. We must seek to expand our sphere of influence by building bridges to these other interest groups if SRB is to remain vital, essential and relevant. How this can be addressed is one of my first challenges as your President.

The second point I have follows from the first. Reproductive biology has many important things to say to the Australian community about issues such as stem cell legislation, biotechnology and its application in both medicine and agriculture. We must make our voice heard and we must become a resource providing balanced commentary to both our State and Federal decision makers and the Public. Therefore I am committed to developing ways in which SRB can become widely regarded as the source of information on such key issues. This needs to involve all of you with expertise in the relevant areas. We need to develop and train a cadre of media savvy spokespersons who can be used to inform others. We need to have a vital web site containing position papers on these issues. In short we need to become regarded as the place people turn to for information on the broad range of issues defined by reproductive biology. To this end I have asked Sarah Meachem to co-ordinate development of a plan to enhance the public profile of SRB through enhanced publicity. Such a plan will only work if you the membership support it. Therefore I ask those of you interested in participating to contact Sarah ([sarah.meachem@princehenrys.org](mailto:sarah.meachem@princehenrys.org)) and express your interest. I am particularly looking at those of you in mid career. You are the future of this Society. It will continue to flourish only if you involve yourselves in any way you feel comfortable in doing so.

Finally, these new initiatives are only possible to contemplate because of the hard work of our immediate past President Lois Salamonsen and the many members of her Executive team. Lois's

partner in all this has been the indomitable Mike Pickford and his team at ASN. On behalf of the Society I thank you all for your many and varied contributions. Their efforts mean the Society is in a very stable financial condition, is well organized and structured and thus can contemplate moving forward confidently. I urge all of you to consider what part you can play in this process.

Please contact me ([Michael.Holland@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:Michael.Holland@med.monash.edu.au)) with your comments and your ideas. It's your Society and it will only serve you if we know your wishes.

Michael Holland, President



**Thank you to our outgoing President, Professor Lois Salamonsen from the SRB council**  
*SRB Council wish to convey their appreciation to Lois for her excellent leadership of the Society over the last triennium. Lois will be remembered for her ability to involve all Council members to work together for the benefit of the Society membership and for her passion for encouraging and promoting the development of our young scientists and students.*

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## Secretary

**Caroline Gargett**

### SRB Council

There was considerable changeover in Council membership at this years AGM as 3 executive positions became vacant. Lois Salamonsen as President, Sarah Robertson as Vice President and Kate Loveland as Treasurer all stood down, having completed 3 year terms. Nominations were called and I am delighted to announce that Michael Holland was elected as President, Sarah Robertson as Treasurer and Lynette Kilpatrick as Ordinary Member, each unopposed to these positions. Jean Fleming has assisted Marie Pantaleon in the

Sponsorship portfolio and both worked with Grant Montgomery on the LOC. Janette Quennell completed her 3 year term and we look forward to working with Erica Little, our new NZ student representative. We are fortunate that Sarah Meachem agreed to assist the Publicity portfolio as a co-opted member. Melinda Jasper retired as Communications Officer/Web Master and David Sharkey has been co-opted to fill this position. Sarah Robertson completes a highly successful 3 year term as POC Chair and Darryl Russell will take on this important role for 2007-9.

Elected Members		Co-opted Members	
President	Michael Holland	Australian Student Rep	Tu'uhe Kaitu'U-Lino
Vice President		NZ Student Rep	Erica Little
Secretary	Caroline Gargett	RFD Rep	Jennifer Henry
Treasurer	Sarah Robertson	RFD Editor	Sharon Mortimer
Ordinary Member (Publicity, POC chair)	Darryl Russell	Publicity	Sarah Meachem
Ordinary Member (Sponsorship)	Marie Pantaleon	Communications	David Sharkey
Ordinary Member (Sponsorship)	Jean Fleming		
Ordinary Member (Membership)	Chris Scott		
Ordinary Member (Newsletter)	Lynette Kilpatrick		

## Future Meetings

Year	Meeting	Location	Dates	LOC Chair
2006	AHMRC Symposium	Melbourne	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov-1 <sup>st</sup> Dec SRB – Tues 28 <sup>th</sup>	Mark Hedger
2007	SRB/ESA	Christchurch	2-5 <sup>th</sup> September	Helen Nicholson, Peter Hurst
2008	SRB/ESA	Melbourne	25-28 <sup>th</sup> August (Mon-Thurs)	TBA
2008	1 <sup>st</sup> International Reproductive Biology Congress	Hawaii	May 27-28	Lois Salamonsen
2009	SRB/ESA	Adelaide	Aug 30– Sept 4 to be finalised	
1010	SRB/ESA	Sydney		
1011	SRB/ESA	Perth		

### 2007 Founders Lecturer and Meat and Livestock Lecturer

Nominations for these lectures are now closed. The SRB Council is in the process of electing lecturers and will notify members.

### 2008 AHMRC Symposium Convener

Nominations will be called for an AHMRC Symposium Convener later this year as the first POC meetings for the 2008 AHMRC will commence late in 2006. This person will be SRB's representative on the AHMRC POC. Council will consider both the nominee and their suggestions for symposium topic and speakers.

### Reproduction, Fertility and Development Editorial Advisory Committee

Our thanks go to Kate Loveland who has retired as SRB representative on the RFD EAC for the last 3 years. SRB is seeking a member to take on this role. Please email the SRB Secretary if you are interested in this position.

[caroline.gargett@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:caroline.gargett@med.monash.edu.au)

### Secretariat

To streamline administrative functions, ASN has introduced on line membership and renewals this year. Communication with members has now been streamlined with SRBNews Bulletins being collated and emailed by ASN on a fortnightly basis. Melinda Jasper and David Sharkey have assisted with this process. Members can look

forward to enhancements on the SRB Website that promote member interaction as new software is currently being trialed which enables bulletin boards, member profiling, email and discussion groups. It is anticipated that new members will automatically be assigned a login name and password.

### Treasurer (2003-2006)

#### **Kate Loveland**

*Adapted from Kate's 2006 AGM Report.* The 2005/2006 audit has been completed and was approved. The combined operating surplus for 2006 for the SRB is \$45,275. The proposed SRB Financial Plan presented at the 2005 Annual Scientific Meeting has been enacted. Investments in two different managed investment funds holding over \$70,000 of SRB funds has yielded profits of \$5,400, while interest from cash held within the SRB account has yielded over \$6,800 in interest.

Over \$33,000 profit was returned to the SRB from ASN from the 2005 Annual Conference. This is in addition to sponsorship paid directly to SRB of \$12,000. Sponsorship for the 2006 annual conference is currently in excess of \$9,000.

The Society received 28 applications for Student Travel Grant Awards for the 2006 annual conference. The Council agreed to provide each travel grant applicant with an

amount approximately equivalent to half of the cost of the lowest economy airfare. In addition, the Society provided support for attendance by two SRB delegates to Science Meets Parliament and Council has established a new award for Early Career Scientists who participate in the Annual Scientific meeting.

### Membership Fees

Membership fees for 2005/2006 are recommended to stand for 2006/2007. This cost includes a \$5 per member payment towards full membership in FASTS.

### Secretariat Support

The administrative support from Mike Pickford, Jacqui Austin and Rhonda Fincham at ASN Events has made the task of caring for the SRB membership financials a straightforward and manageable task. I would like to thank them for their help during my time as Treasurer. I would also like to thank Professor Chris O'Neil (University of Sydney), Professor Peter Rogers (Monash University) and Mr. Neil McLean of the NAB, and my colleagues on the SRB Executive Council for their time and help in establishing and effecting a financial planning strategy that will ensure our delegates' investment in the Society can be returned to enrich the SRB activities for many years to come.

Kate Loveland has served 3 years as treasurer on the SRB council and stood down this year. Council would like to thank Kate for her enormous effort in maintaining the society in a strong financial position.

Sarah Robertson was elected as treasurer at the 2006 AGM and we wish her all the best for the coming term.

### Program Organising Committee Chair (2003-2006)

#### **Sarah Robertson**

This year's 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the SRB held in conjunction with the ESA at the Gold Coast Convention Centre continued to

reflect the Society's diverse research interests and expanded membership base. A total of 106 abstracts were accepted for presentation as oral free communication. The SRB program was enriched this year by joint convening with the DownUnder Embryo satellite meeting. In addition our program featured the following highlights:

- Symposium: Where genotype meets phenotype; the new frontier
- Symposium: Stem cells in reproductive tissues
- DownUnder Embryo Joint Symposium: Epigenetic mechanisms in programming pre-implantation embryos
- SRB-ANZPRA Symposium: Growth factor regulation of implantation and placental development
- Joint ESA-SRB Symposium: Genetic causes of reproductive failure
- Founders' Lecturer: Marilyn Renfree
- Meat Livestock Australia Plenary Lecturer: Bill Thatcher
- Serono New Investigator Award
- Meat Livestock Australia New Scientist Award
- ANZPRA New Investigator Award
- SRB-RCRH Award for Excellence in Reproductive Biology Research
- Joint SRB/ESA Male Reproduction and Female Reproduction Sessions
- Workshop on Talking Science with the Media
- Student Roundtable with Founders' Lecturer

*Founders Lecturer, Marilyn Renfree (middle) with (left) Josie McConnell (invited speaker, University of London), and (right) Lorraine Young (invited speaker, University of Newcastle, UK). Photo courtesy of Marilyn Renfree*



A big 'thank you' to all the speakers and chairs for their contribution to the success of the 2007 program!

The 2006 meeting marks the completion of my term as Chair of the Program Organising Committee. Thank you to the members of the 2003- 2006 POCs for their hard work and the SRB Council for their helpful support over the past three years.

Society members should forward their ideas on potential program content for Christchurch, 2007 to the incoming Chair of the POC, Dr Darryl Russell ([darryl.russell@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:darryl.russell@adelaide.edu.au)).

## Call for Program Suggestions

**2007 SRB Annual Scientific Conference**  
to be held in conjunction with ESA

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2007**

**Christchurch Convention Centre,  
New Zealand**

The Program Organising Committee is now seeking suggestions from SRB Society members on potential program content for Christchurch 2007. Please communicate potential symposium topics and speakers to the POC Chair at [darryl.russell@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:darryl.russell@adelaide.edu.au)

**Postgraduate Student Rep Report**  
**Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino (Aus)**  
**Erica Little (NZ)**

The SRB workshop at this years conference, "Talking Science to the Media" was well

received by a number of students and other SRB members and such workshops will continue in years to come. As in past years, a student luncheon roundtable discussion was held with the Founder's lecturer, Professor Marilyn Renfree to which ~20 students attended and utilized this opportunity to converse with Professor Renfree.

The student/supervisor mixer was again subsidized this year which resulted in another sell-out event. We have taken on board suggestions from attendees for a less formal event in future years to allow a greater level of interaction between students and senior researchers.

**Student Meeting:** The annual student meeting provides an opportunity for all SRB students to voice their opinions and give their feedback about/to the society. SRB travel grants were distributed at this meeting, with all recipients in attendance, which was a fantastic turnout. This year there were 3 main issues discussed;

- the need for student members to carefully follow instructions to ensure their consideration for the NIA,
- an initiative to make SRB student members feel more united,
- and the possibility of introducing some type of mentor program at future meetings.

For the first time in 2006, the application process for the Serono NIA required applicants to provide a brief 100-word blurb about their career progress and contribution to the work being submitted. Unfortunately a large number of students failed to submit this blurb and thus could not be considered for inclusion into this award. **All SRB students are encouraged to apply for this award in 2007 and ensure that they fulfill all requirements.**

It was proposed to student members that they embark upon a small fundraising initiative, where funds could be dedicated to functions or other events at the annual

conference. Ideas included a 'SRB student T-shirt'. When canvassed, students agreed, but would prefer to be identifiable to one another at meetings by a different color identification tag at the annual conference.

Whilst students were very happy to have the opportunity to meet with the Founder's Lecturer, Marilyn Renfree, some students felt that they would like to see a larger mentoring program introduced for future meetings. It was proposed that students be given the opportunity to nominate a senior scientist with whom a small group of similarly interested students can meet (either over lunch or at the student/supervisor mixer). It was hoped that this type of initiative would offer a more formal approach to networking.

All suggestions will be presented to council at the next meeting and the outcome reported to students in future newsletters/emails.

I'd like to take this opportunity to formally welcome Erica Little from the University of Otago who was elected onto council unopposed as NZ student rep. We sincerely thank Janette Quennel for her work throughout her term with the SRB.

If students have any queries or suggestions, please feel free to contact Tu'uhe [tuuhevaha.kaituu@princehenrys.org](mailto:tuuhevaha.kaituu@princehenrys.org) or Erica [liter684@student.otago.ac.nz](mailto:liter684@student.otago.ac.nz). Or visit the SRB student webpage for more info <http://www.srb.org.au/students.htm>

## **New Investigator Awards (NIAs) 2006**

**Peter Kaye**

### **Serono NIA**

Annual Dinner tickets were awarded to this year's short listed new investigators:

- Rachel Chan: MIMR, VIC. *Estrogen Stimulates Mouse Endometrial Stem-like Cell Proliferation,*
- Natalie Hannan: PHIMR, VIC. *A novel role for fractalkine in regulating human trophoblast extracellular matrix and adhesion molecules.*

- Premila Paiva: PHIMR, VIC. *Interleukin-11 promotes migration but not proliferation of human trophoblast cells.*
- Saleela Ruwanpura: PHIMR, VIC. *Accelerated apoptosis is the cause of germ cell loss in gonadotrophin-suppressed men.*
- Kirsty Walters: ANZAC Research Institute, NSW. *Androgen receptor is not essential for female reproduction but plays important roles in optimising follicle development and ovulation.*
- Camryn Allen: University of Queensland, QLD. *Successful artificial insemination in the koala using neat and extended semen collected by electroejaculation.*

Those with the privilege of attending the Serono-sponsored session earlier that afternoon were treated to a wonderfully broad range of reproductive biology from humans to koalas. The Serono-NIA committee had the usual difficult task to select a winner, who was Dr Kirsty Walters. In addition to a flash meal, Kirsty was presented with a cheque for \$3000 from Serono to be used on suitably career-oriented travel. Congratulations to Kirsty and all speakers. We acknowledge Serono for their generous support of this award over almost 2 decades.



*Kirsty Walters (middle) receiving her award from Lois Salamonsen (left) and Serono Senior Product Manager, Jane Parker (right).*

### **MLA NIA**

This award is chosen for the best paper in the conference describing work on livestock.

This year the committee was unable to

separate Dr Penelope Hawken (University of Western Australia) and Dr Zhen Zhang (MIMR, Vic and CSIRO, NSW). So these are the joint winners for 2006. They receive \$3000 for career-oriented travel. Our thanks to MLA for sponsoring this award which is aimed at developing reproductive researchers in livestock.

**To apply for an NIA in 2007:**

1. be a member within 2 years (Serono-NIA) or 10 years (MLA-NIA) of receiving your PhD,
2. submit an abstract on the SRB website ([www.esa-srb.org.au](http://www.esa-srb.org.au)),
3. activate the webpage radiobutton,
4. AND download, complete and return to ASN the *statement of attribution and brief career history*.

Your abstract will be assessed on Methods and statistics, Technical expertise, Conclusion, Originality & Innovation and Presentation, to select the shortlist of speakers. Then anonymous members who attend your presentation will select the winner of each award.

My thanks to each member of the committees and those who have been members over the last few years. Like healthy gonads, committees should be dynamic, so I am off to allow someone new the pleasure!

**SRB-RCRH Award for Excellence in Reproductive Biology Research 2006**

This year a new award, the SRB-RCRH Award for Excellence in Reproductive Biology Research, was initiated and is sponsored by the Research Centre for Reproductive Health at the University of Adelaide. The award, valued at \$3000, is made to a mid-career member of SRB, no more than 10 years since award of PhD, who has demonstrated outstanding research success in the field of reproductive biology. The inaugural winner of the award was Moira O'Bryan (MIMR, Vic) for her abstract on *Genetic Causes of Reproductive Failure in the Male*.



*Moira O'Bryan (middle) receiving her award from Rob Norman (RCRH) and Lois Salamonsen*

Moira received her PhD from The University of Melbourne before moving to the Center for Biomedical Research in New York as an Andrew Mellon Foundation Post-doctoral Fellow. There she worked on the purification and characterisation of Sertoli cell derived regulators of pituitary function. Back in Australia, Moira is now at MIMR and has published extensively on the interaction between the immune system and male fertility, endocrine regulation, the identification and characterization of novel sperm tail proteins and the genetics of male infertility. She has also been involved in the promotion of medical research as a national director of the ASMR and as an advisor to Andrology Australia and the Australian Phenomics Facility. (*Biography adapted from MIMR web*)

This award will be offered again in 2007 and eligible members can apply at the time of abstract submission.

**Membership**  
***Chris Scott***

The total SRB membership has remained steady in 2005-2006, but the fully paid up membership increased from last year. This is likely due to fewer members allowing their membership to lapse this year (36 members this year compared with 69 last year) and is a benefit of the new on-line membership renewal system and a more concerted effort on the part of the secretariat to remind members to pay their dues.

<b>Group</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
Total members paid & short term unfinancial	320	311
Members who have paid until 2006 (2005)	212	200
Members who have paid until 2007 (2006)	24	25
Members who have paid until 2008 (2007)	10	16
Unfinancial	108 <sup>a</sup>	111
New members	33	32
Life members <sup>b</sup>	8	3
Number of people who are new to the books but did not apply for membership	6	23
Financial members who had been unfinancial in previous year	8	15
<sup>a</sup> includes 36 who are one year unfinancial and 61 who have not paid membership dues since 2004. <sup>b</sup> included in the number of paid up members.		

This year we trialed a new on-line membership renewal system. While there are a few minor changes needed, it appeared to work very well. We welcome any feedback about what you thought of the system and how we can improve it.

During the year we discovered that only those who have been members from 2005 - 2006 were on the mailing list of the Secretariat. Thus those who had been members in 2003/2004 but for whatever reason had not renewed in 2005 were not receiving any information about the activities of the Society or membership renewal notices. Thus, a number of long-term faithful and active members of the Society slipped off the radar. This is probably a glitch due to the transfer of Secretariat last year, but these former members have been placed on the email list for now and will be invited to renew their membership next year.

We will soon commence the membership renewal process. All members will be invited in late November to visit the on-line membership site and renew membership. We will also contact those who have let their membership lapse in the past and invite them to come back to the Society, as well as non-members attending our meetings.

*Current membership of the Society will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006. Please email [chscott@csu.edu.au](mailto:chscott@csu.edu.au) with membership enquiries.*

## **RFD Journal**

### **Sharon Mortimer, Editor**

*Reproduction, Fertility and Development* has had another excellent year, with one of the highlights being the large increase in its Impact Factor to 1.515 (up from last year's figure of 0.920). In addition, the Immediacy Index for RFD of 0.697 is the third highest in the Reproductive Biology category of journals. The Immediacy Index is an indicator of how quickly published papers are cited, as it refers to the proportion of papers cited in the same year that they were published. Other performance factors are also strong, including the still-increasing number of submissions, and the large number of hits and downloads of papers from the website.

Another highlight is that *RFD* has been awarded the contract to publish the Proceedings of the IETS Annual Conference for the next five years. This will lead not only to increased international exposure of all the research published in *RFD*, which will continue to support and sustain the journal's upward trends, but also of the researchers.

I hope that you have found the changes in *RFD* over the past 2 years to have been positive, and you feel that the research being published is still relevant to your work. Either way, I am always happy to discuss the journal's direction, and I would be grateful to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

[sharon-mortimer@shaw.ca](mailto:sharon-mortimer@shaw.ca)



## Recent Awards

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### Awards to 2 pioneer SRB members

We would like to congratulate current and former SRB members, Brian Setchell (Past President and author of *History of the Australian Society for Reproductive Biology 1968-1994*, RFD, 1995) and David Lindsay (formerly Professor of Animal Science at the University of Western Australia) who received awards as pioneers in the field of Ruminant Reproduction at the 7th International Ruminant Reproduction Symposium held in Wellington, New Zealand in August.

## Conference Announcements

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SRB is proudly sponsoring a symposium at the upcoming

### 3rd Australian Health & Medical Research Congress (AH&MRC)

to be held in Melbourne on  
26th November - 1st December 2006.  
Please visit the website for more details  
<http://www.ahmrccongress.org.au/>

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### INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANIMAL BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION

FROM SEX DIFFERENTIATION TO REPRODUCTIVE BIOTECHNOLOGY  
in honour of **Dr. Brian P. Setchell**

Federal University of Minas Gerais  
Belo Horizonte MG, Brazil  
November 15-18, 2006

<http://www.drsoolucoes.com.br/isabr/program.do>

## 2006 SRB Conference Dinner in Pictures

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Naomi Morison, Saleela Ruwanpura and SRB Council Student rep Tu'uhe Kaitu'u-Lino



Craig Harrison, Rob Gilchrist and Kate Loveland



Graeme Martin, Mark Hedger, Grant Montgomery and Jean Fleming