

# Society for Reproductive Biology

Newsletter No. 59 October 2008

## President's Report SRB AGM September 2008 Michael Holland

This has been another year of strong performance by the Society in many areas. Our financial position continues to strengthen despite the volatility of the share market. Our cash reserves now stand at almost \$200,000. I think that we need to give serious thought to using some of this reserve for the benefit of the Membership and to improve the Society. The Committee will be addressing this at the meeting prior to the AGM but I welcome suggestions from the membership at large for actions and activities which would improve our Society. We have enhanced support for our student members in both the areas of travel awards and prizes. We shall continue in this vein. Students are the future of our Society and we need to improve their circumstances and so I am delighted that for this meeting we have provided the full cost of the lowest economy airfare. This was possible this year because fewer travel awards were required as the meeting is Melbourne. It should be our goal to continue this level of support into the future. This will be possible if our Society continues to grow. In that regard I am delighted to report that early registrations for the Conference are at an all time high as is the number of abstracts submitted. These are additional strong signs of a healthy Society. Nevertheless it is my view that we could do more to increase our membership and I hope in the next 12 months to develop plans to address this goal

**Call for Program Suggestions  
2009 SRB Annual Scientific Conference  
To be held in conjunction with ESA  
Adelaide Convention centre  
23rd-26th August 2008**

**Darryl Russell Program organising Committee Chair**

The Program Organizing Committee is now seeking suggestions from SRB Society members on potential program content for Adelaide 2009. Please communicate potential symposium topics and speakers to the POC Chair at: [darryl.russell@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:darryl.russell@adelaide.edu.au)

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## Secretary's report

### SRB AGM September 2008

#### Chris Grupen

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Firstly, I'd like to say what a huge honour it is to take on the role of Secretary for such a vibrant and vital Society. I really appreciate how welcoming and patient everyone on Council has been as I've worked out what I need to do! This was made much easier thanks to the wonderful efforts and great advice of the previous Secretary, Caroline Gargett.

There were 2 vacancies on the Council this year, with Lynette Kilpatrick (Membership Portfolio) resigning and Jean Fleming (Sponsorship Portfolio) retiring after completing a second 3 year term. Many thanks to Lyn for her efforts on Council – we wish her all the best as she takes time off from science to look after her little ones. Jean has made an outstanding contribution to Council and leaves the Sponsorship Portfolio in the best shape ever. Not only has she negotiated continued support from the Society's long standing award sponsors, she has also secured new sponsorship deals from Oozoa and the Centre for Reproduction and Genomics.

Nominations were called for the 2 vacant Ordinary Council Member positions and 8 nominations were received. Following the preferential voting, I am delighted to announce that A/Prof Eileen McLaughlin, Lecturer in Biological Sciences and Biotechnology at the University of Newcastle, and Dr Wendy Ingman, Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Adelaide, have been elected.

A huge thank you to Darryl Russell, the POC Chair, for putting together another excellent scientific programme and to Mark Hedger, the LOC Chair, for bringing everything together to ensure the meeting was one to remember. Finally, I'd like to thank all the continuing and co-opted Council members for their contributions throughout the year.

#### *2008/2009 Council*

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<i>Elected</i>		<i>Co-opted</i>	
<i>President</i>	Michael Holland	<i>Student Rep -Aus</i>	Hannah Brown
<i>Secretary</i>	Chris Grupen	<i>Student Rep -NZ</i>	Kathryn Askelund
<i>Treasurer</i>	Sarah Robertson	<i>Publicity</i>	Sarah Meachem
<i>Ordinary Members</i>		<i>Communications</i>	David Sharkey
<i>POC Chair</i>	Darryl Russell	<i>RFD Editor</i>	Sharon Mortimer
<i>Membership</i>	Susan Jones	<i>RFD Rep</i>	Chris Scott
	Larry Chamley	<i>Newsletter</i>	Megan Mitchell
	Eileen McLaughlin		
	Wendy Ingman		

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## Treasurer's Report

Sarah Robertson

*Finances:* The financial audit is now complete and details of the society's financial position for 2007/2008 is in the table below.

SRB is in a solid financial position with total equity (net assets) at 30 June 2008 of \$273,560 (\$263,942 at 30 June 2007). This comprised cash in bank of \$197,865 (\$161,093 in 2007), and investments at market value of \$72,037 (\$97,439 in 2007).

*Investment performance:* The SRB financial plan enacted in March 2006 was followed through 2007 and 2008. Market value of investments in Colonial First State Managed Investment Fund and MLC Australian Share Fund reduced in combined value from \$97,439 at 30 June 2007 to \$72,037 at 30 June 2008.

This change in investment value is in line with the market fluctuations. Advice from an accredited financial planner in August was to retain our current investment portfolio. I am seeking further advice in view of the further turmoil in world financial markets through the third quarter of 2008. Interest from cash in the SRB account held at the ASN National Australia Bank Account yielded \$10,566 in interest.

*Conference income:* \$26,828 in profit was returned to the SRB from ASN from the 2007 Annual Conference (\$17,444 in 2006). A record profit is expected from 2008 Annual Conference.

*Membership:* Membership subscriptions are up substantially to \$21,473 in 2008 (from \$12,695 in 2007).

*Sponsorship:* Sponsorship for the 2008 annual conference was in excess of \$12,500. Current sponsors are detailed on the sponsorship report.

*Student Travel Grants:* The Society received 27 applications for Student Travel Grant Awards for the 2008 annual conference (39 in 2007). The Council agreed to provide each travel grant applicant with an amount approximately equivalent to 100% of the cost of the lowest economy airfare, resulting in a total cost to SRB of \$8,690 (\$13,470 in 2007). The decrease in applicant numbers this year was due to the meeting location in Melbourne. The 100% airfare support will help build student membership.

*Membership Fees:* Fees for 2007/2008 will stand for 2008/2009. Fees include a \$6.25 per full member payment for membership of FASTS. An increase in membership fees is foreshadowed for 2009/2010 to meet the rising costs of SRB activities.

*Conference Abstract Publication:* The SRB has enacted an agreement with CSIRO Publishing for on-line publication of the 2008 conference abstracts at a cost of \$6930. Abstracts are now available at <http://publish.csiro.au/nid/45/issue/4038.htm>

*Future expenditure:* In view of our good financial position, SRB Council is planning to provide greater financial support to build the Annual Conference program for 2009, and is considering initiatives to foster career development for SRB members.

### INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Conference	26,828	17,444
Interest	10,566	21,199
Unrealised gain/(loss) on investments	(25,401)	5,994
Sponsorship	5,000	20,250
Subscriptions	21,473	12,695
Other income	90	150
	<u>38,556</u>	<u>77,732</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Accountancy	660	660
Audit fee	550	550
Bank charges	346	249
Conference	-	11,257
Consultancy	5,390	4,683
Meeting expenses	889	922
Miscellaneous	595	556
Printing and publication	216	1,598
Researcher award	5,000	5,500
Student travel grant	13,470	250
Subscriptions	729	270
Travel Expense	1,092	-
	<u>28,938</u>	<u>26,495</u>
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<u>9,618</u>	<u>51,237</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	197,865	161,093
Investments - at market value	72,037	97,439
Other receivables and prepayment	4,208	5,410
	<u>274,110</u>	<u>263,942</u>
	\$	\$
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provision for audit fee	550	-
	<u>273,560</u>	<u>263,942</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>273,560</u>	<u>263,942</u>
Represented by:	\$	\$
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Retained surplus	<u>273,560</u>	<u>263,942</u>



The new format poster session was a great success at this years Annual Scientific Meeting

## POC Report Darryl Russell

Program organising Committee  
Darryl Russell (chair)  
Rebecca Robker  
Eva Dimitriadi  
Theresa Hickey

All contributed invaluable to the programming of symposium topics and speaker invitations, abstract reviewing. I thank the POC members for their assistance  
*The Conference Program for 2008 featured:*

- Founders' Lecturer; Prof. Jeffrey Robinson
- Inaugural Reproduction Fertility & Development Lecture; Prof. Hamish Frazer
- SRB-RCRH Award for Excellence in Reproductive Biology Research Orator; Sarah Robertson
- 5 SRB Symposia
- SRB-ESA Symposium Gametogenesis"
- Sero New Investigator Award Finalist session
- Meat Livestock Australia New Scientist Award (candidates throughout program)
- 3 x Centre for Reproduction and Genomics Awards for poster presentations
- Oozoa Award for research on male and female gametes
- ANZPRA New Investigator Award (candidates throughout program)
- SRB/ESA Male Reproduction and Female Reproduction Sessions
- 10 sessions of oral presentations. 80 x 15 minute presentations
- Student Roundtable discussion with Founders' Lecturer

### *New developments this year:*

- Poster session has been reintroduced to the program, 46 poster presentations. The poster session is to be conducted as an unopposed joint session with ESA to encourage strong attendance and interaction between societies at the posters.
- 3 x CRG awards specifically for poster presentations.
- Oral presentations all 15 minute format (10 min oration + 5 min questions).
- RF&D award plenary oration replaces the MLA award
- Abstracts will be published as an online supplement of Reproduction Fertility and Development immediately after the meeting making them searchable online and citable.
- 130 abstracts were submitted for presentation this year. This maintains the consistent increases in presentations over recent years (110 in 2007, 106 in 2006, 112 in 2005, 86 in 2004, 91 in 2003, 75 in 2002).
- The ESA program is highly complimentary to the SRB program and interaction ESA POC chair Helen McLean to optimise program content and timetable was straightforward and beneficial to both programs.
- The topic of the ESA/SRB Joint symposium "Gametogenesis" was proposed by ESA this year.
- Support from Mike Pickford, and ASN staff has been fantastic throughout the process of program organisation. ASN completed all of the copy provision and layout, and production tasks.
- In 2009 the meeting schedule will return to commencing on Sunday afternoon with a workshop, additional sessions may be added to accommodate the rising abstract submissions by continuing the meeting through Wednesday afternoon.

## SRB Awards 2008



*The Finalists of the 2008 Merck Serono New Investigator Award, with Michael Holland, (from L to R): Gayathri Rajaraman, Lenka Vodstrcil, Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino, Premila Paiva, Gabrielle Wilson and Christine Yeo*



*The SRB Reproduction Fertility and Development Award lecturer Hamish Fraser is congratulated by Jeremy Thompson*

Reproduction, Fertility  
and Development



*Research Centre For Reproductive Health SRB Mid-Career Researcher Award winner Sarah Robertson is congratulated by the RCRH Director Rob Norman*



Trudi Flatscher-Bader from the University of Queensland  
Meat and Livestock Australia New Scientist Award - \$2000

Ellen Menkhorst from the Prince Henry's Institute  
Centre for Reproduction and Genomics Early Career Researcher Poster Award- \$1500



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REPRODUCTION  
AND GENOMICS



## SRB Awards 2008



Michael Holland presenting the Merck Serono New Investigator Award to Gabrielle Wilson from Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne (\$3000)



Neil Gemmell presenting the Centre for Reproduction And Genomics Student Poster Award to Ang Zhou from the Research Centre for Reproductive Health, The University of Adelaide (\$1500).



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AND GENOMICS



Sharon Mortimer presenting the SRB Oozoa Student Award to Matthew Dun from the University of Newcastle.(\$500)



Neil Gemmell presenting the Centre for Reproduction and Genomics Established Researcher Poster Award to Caroline Gargett, Monash Institute of Medical Research (\$1500)



CENTRE FOR  
REPRODUCTION  
AND GENOMICS



## Nominations are called for the following lectures in 2009

2009 Founders Lecture

2009 RFD Lecture

Nominations to the SRB secretary Chris Grupen: [cgruppen@vetsci.usyd.edu.au](mailto:cgruppen@vetsci.usyd.edu.au)

### Student representatives

#### Hannah Brown (Aust) and Kathryn Askelund (NZ)

This year we welcome our new Australian student representative Hannah Brown. Hannah has kindly stepped in to replace Tu-uhe who was our previous Australian rep. We'd therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Tu-uhe for her contribution to the SRB.

At last year's conference in New Zealand it was noted that SRB students were interested in a discussion board/forum as part of the SRB website where students could interact with other members of the society.

Students were also interested in the opportunity to introduce a mentoring program.

Both these issues have been raised with the committee.

Both student representatives will be continuing in their role for the following year.



### Sponsorship Portfolio

#### Jean S Fleming

Following the annual SRB-ESA meeting in Christchurch, NZ, letters of thanks were sent to Merck Serono (\$3000 New Investigator Award Finalist Prize), University of Adelaide Research Centre for Reproductive Health (SRB-RCRH Award for Excellence in Reproductive Biology: \$3000) and Meat & Livestock Australia (\$2000: MLA Plenary Lecture ) detailing award recipients and conference attendance. An invitation to contribute to the SRB newsletter was included, but hasn't been followed up, largely because of my move back to a new position at the University of Otago in 2008.

Merck Serono have agreed to continue their support of the New Investigator Award and the MLA have agreed to continue their sponsorship of the Plenary Lecture for 2008. Important new sponsorship was welcomed from Oozoa, for the best presentation (oral or poster) of original research performed and given by a student at the SRB Annual Meeting on sperm or oocyte physiology. Major new sponsorship was also obtained from AgResearch/University of Otago's Centre of Reproduction & Genomics, who are sponsoring three major poster prizes at the inaugural SRB/ESA joint poster session at the 2008 meeting, along with refreshments. Two further sponsorship invitations were declined. The ASN continues to attract a high level of corporate sponsorship for the exhibition area.





ICAR 2008 Budapest, Hungary (L to R): The impressive World Trade Centre, the conference dinner was held on the 'Europa' cruise ship, which travelled up and down the Danube, and Gareth Evans, centre, enjoys the meal.

## **ICAR report to SRB Professor Gareth Evans**

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The 16th International Congress on Animal Reproduction was held in Budapest on 13-17th July this year. There were close to 1000 delegates, with approximately 40 from Australia. Katherine Morton, SRB's TJ Robinson Travelling Fellowship Awardee delivered a symposium address, and several other SRB members were on the main program as speakers or chairs. Of particularly worthy note, was the participation of long-standing SRB members Prof Brian Setchell, as a speaker at the Applied Animal Andrology satellite meeting, and nonagenarian Dr Steven Salamon, who kept speakers on their toes at ICAR and the Camelid Reproduction satellite with a barrage of perceptive questions. Salamon, along with Bill Thatcher (USA), was awarded the Hungarian Society of Animal Reproduction's prestigious Hetzel Medal for lifetime achievement at the ICAR meeting.

The 17th ICAR will be held in Vancouver in 2012, with Dr Gregg Adams as local secretary. Graeme Martin, Chis Maxwell and Gareth Evans (as Secretary General) will remain as Australia's representatives to the Standing Committee of ICAR for a further 4 year term.

## **T.J. Robinson Travel Awardee ICAR report Katherine Morton**

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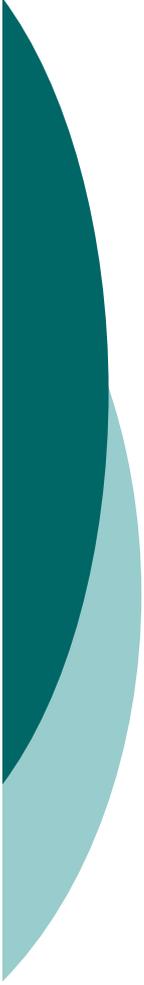
This year I was the recipient of the T.J. Robinson Travel Award to attend the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Animal Reproduction, held in Budapest, Hungary. I would like to thank the SRB and the local organising committee of ICAR for making the award possible. The award recognises the outstanding contribution of Professor Terry Robinson to the field of Animal Reproduction and the SRB, and it was a great honour to receive the award, and have the opportunity to present some of my research at ICAR.

The following day saw the first day of the Camelid Reproduction Satellite meeting kindly organised by Drs. Peter Nagy, Judith Juhasz and Gyula Huszenicza. The meeting was held at the Budapest Zoo and Botanical Gardens in 'the cave' which really was a cave! The atmosphere was amazing, with over 50 camelid scientists from around the world gathered in a wonderfully intimate conference room. Prof. Miklos Persanyi, director of the Budapest Zoo, opened the meeting, and was followed by Dr. Bernard Faye talking about the production potential and importance of camelids to the world economy.

Presentations on the two days covered topics such as an update in the advances in the application of reproductive technologies to camelids; male physiology; female physiology; embryo transfer and reproductive efficiency. The first day concluded with a private tour around Budapest Zoo hosted by Prof. Persanyi and a gala feast of traditional Hungarian food at Gundel, one of Budapest's most famous restaurants.

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At the conclusion of the second day, delegates rushed to the congress centre for the ICAR welcome party where we enjoyed good wine, food and caught up with colleagues. The four days of the congress were amazing, with an abundance of stimulation presentations and discussions. There were 1000 delegates from numerous countries, and six Australians presented in the plenary, symposium and workshop sessions.

The conference opened with the awarding of the Simmet Prize, which went to Professor Cesare Galli who gave a fascinating presentation on the manipulation of early development in farm animals. The first plenary session then continued with Dr. Dominique Blache speaking about a subject of great interest and relevance to us all. His topic was the ethically improved animal experimentation in the study of animal reproduction. The plenary sessions continued with topics including developments in sustainable animal production and reproduction; neuroendocrine control of reproduction and conservation of biodiversity.

The astounding diversity of topics was also maintained throughout the eleven symposium sessions, which covered bovine, equine and porcine reproduction; reproduction in buffalo and exotic Bovidae; pet carnivore reproduction; new methods in reproduction; molecular biology of reproduction; stress diseased state and reproduction; endocrine and paracrine control of testicular function; oocyte and embryo technology; artificial insemination and related techniques and small ruminant reproduction. The last area was where my presentation occurred, following a fascinating presentation by Dr. Bernard Leboeuf, from France, who gave a comprehensive overview of the management of goat reproduction for genetic improvement.

The artificial insemination symposium session I found absolutely fascinating, and of great relevance to my current work in Camelids. The session began with Professor Detlef Rath from Germany discussing the application and commercialisation of sex-sorted sperm. This area is of great interest to many researchers and commercial producers throughout the world.

The symposium continued with Dr. Juan Vazques from Spain discussing the problems and possibilities of low dose insemination in pigs, followed by Dr. John Kastelic from Canada who refreshed all our memories on breeding soundness evaluation and semen analysis for predicting bull fertility. The importance of breeding soundness evaluation is often overlooked in many species, and this presentation really reminded the audience just how crucial examining males for breeding soundness is.

Dr. Gary Althouse, from the USA concluded the session with a presentation on the sanitary procedures for the production of extended semen, another crucial step in the production of semen for commercial breeding programs. In addition to the these important presentations, the symposium and workshop session displayed a whopping 581 posters! The poster sessions were a hive of activity, and also continued the theme of astounding diversity of species and topics.

The social program was also fantastic, with a get together at the Lazar equestrian park where delegates were treated to a cultural display of traditional Hungarian horsemanship, a feast of Hungarian food and after dinner, traditional Hungarian dancing. The Congress dinner was an atmospheric river boat cruise and gala dinner. Delegates enjoyed drinks while taking in the incredible and historic scenery as the boat cruised down the Danube. Sights included the rolling hills of the west bank and many historic buildings including the parliament, and the impressive Castle.

Congratulations to the hardworking convenors for such a stimulating and balanced programme. I am so grateful for this opportunity, and for the T.J. Robinson scholarship. The scientific programme was outstanding and the opportunity provided for discussions with colleagues amazing. Anyone who attended this conference must have been inspired to return to the 17<sup>th</sup> ICAR which will be held in Canada in 2012.

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**The Society for Reproductive  
Biology Symposia  
Monday 17th November 2008**

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**Development of functional testes and  
ovaries**

Peter Koopman - University of  
Queensland  
Andrew Sinclair - Murdoch Children s  
Research Institute  
Ryszard Malezka - Australian National  
University

**Building healthy oocytes and sperm**

Shunichi Shimasaki - USA  
Darryl Russell - University of Adelaide  
Charles Allan - ANZAC Institute

**Environmental interference with gamete  
development role in infertility?**

Patricia Hunt - Washington State, USA  
Jeremy Thompson - University of  
Adelaide  
John Aitken - University of Newcastle

Visit the website for more information, a  
full program, and to register.  
<http://www.srb.org.au/>; or contact  
[hp@asnevents.net.au](mailto:hp@asnevents.net.au)



**Brisbane Convention Centre  
16th - 21st November 2008**

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**Jock Findlay AO PhD DSc**

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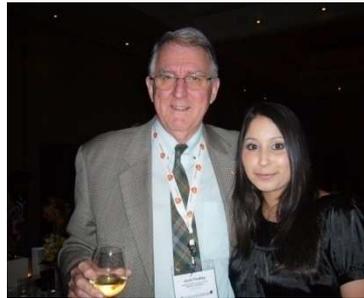
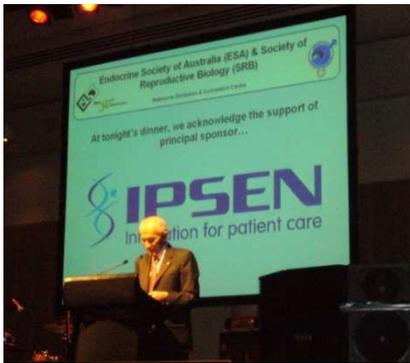
Professor Jock Findlay is Head of the Female Reproductive Endocrinology Group of Prince Henry's Institute of Medical Research and a Senior Principal Research Fellow of the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC). He is also Director of Research at the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. He is Chairperson of the Infertility Treatment Authority of Victoria and the NHMRC Embryo Research Licensing Committee. Professor Findlay was Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group, Department of Reproductive Health & Research, World Health Organisation, Geneva, Switzerland from 1998-2003.

His awards include the Goding (Founders) Lecture of SRB (1992), the Society for Endocrinology, UK, Asia and Oceania Medal (1999), the Society for Endocrinology, UK Dale Medal (2006) and the Distinguished Scientist Award of the Society for Reproduction and Fertility, UK (2006). He is an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for services to medicine in the field of reproductive endocrinology as a researcher, through contributions to the regulation and promotion of assisted reproductive technology and treatment, and to the development of national and international health programs. Professor Findlay's research led to a paradigm shift in understanding the importance of local as well as peripheral regulation of endocrine tissues, particularly by inhibin. The concept of local regulation has been examined in the pituitary, ovary, adrenal and endometrium.



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## 2008 Conference Dinner



### **Communications**

*To make any contributions to the newsletter including Institute and Research Centre News, Awards, Upcoming Conferences and Events, Reports and Media Commentaries, please contact newsletter editor Megan Mitchell  
[megan.mitchell@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:megan.mitchell@adelaide.edu.au)*

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