

Society for Reproductive Biology Newsletter



October 2012

President's Report

At the end of my first two months as SRB President, I am pleased to report that the Society is now poised to capitalise on the sterling work of our members in expanding a robust and exciting society.

In late September, the Australian government announced a review of all discretionary grant schemes. Since then both the ARC and CRC have confirmed that all funding announcements and the opening of new rounds are on hold - and I hope that this delay will be brief. It is important that SRB members work together at this time to encourage, mentor and support each other as finances become limited and competition to secure external funding increases. Feedback to government on research funding is important – and SRB members are encouraged to view the McKeon consultation document and to comment by 31st Oct 2012.

Changing of the Guard

Thanks to outgoing President Mark Hedger and Treasurer Rick Nicholson for their excellent efforts in ensuring the Society remains in a very strong position, both scientifically and financially. My thanks also to the retiring POC co-chair Charles Allan, who organised a wide ranging clinical and scientific meeting at the Gold Coast, which engendered much praise from the delegates for the breadth of topic and high level science on show. Charles has graciously volunteered to be a member of the next LOC chaired by Kristy Walters (ANZAC Institute) for the upcoming meeting in Sydney and remains an integral part of Council. Appreciation also to Chris O'Neill and Eva Dimitriadis of our Awards Committees, who worked tirelessly to ensure that we had excellent prize sessions – they too have agreed to continue as chairs in 2013.

Secretariat and Sponsorship

On behalf of the POCs, I thank ASN, particularly Mike Pickford, Jim Fawcett and Heather Prowd for an excellent meeting on the Gold Coast and their unflagging support as SRB Secretariat. Additionally, I want to thank our Sponsors, who support the many and varied awards at the Annual Conference including: Reproduction Fertility and Development, the University of Adelaide Robinson Institute and Research Centre for Reproductive Health, the Priority Research Centre in Reproductive Science, University of Newcastle, and David and Sharon Mortimer of Oozoa Biomedical. We look forward to their continued support in the upcoming years.

Upcoming SRB ASMR 2012 meeting


This year SRB has sponsored an Endometriosis Symposium at the Australian Health and Medical Research Congress in Adelaide on 25 Nov 2012. Prof Bruce Lessey heads a stellar cast of speakers put together by Peter Rogers and Jonathan McGuane, our ECR representative. I encourage all members with an interest in Maternal and Fetal Health to attend as there are several complementary symposia on placental and uterine biology, early development and environmental impacts on reproductive health.



New initiatives for 2013

Our secretary Jane Girling has been a tower of strength in organising me! and Council, while simultaneously updating our web page. She is currently reviewing options for the SRB branding of the conference booth and associated members information packs for 2013. Jeremy Smith (sponsorship secretary) has already been successful in securing new sponsorship for the next triennial.

I am pleased to welcome the incoming Council Member Rebecca Robker and our new Treasurer Jeremy Thompson, both from University of Adelaide. Rebecca joins Kaye Stenvers (Prince Henry's, Melbourne) as the co-chair of the new POC for next year's meeting in Sydney. Kaye and Becky have already drafted plans for a meeting structure to maximise our scientific and public presence in Sydney in 2013. They will be aided by our new media consultants Ruby Communications and Sarah Meachem, the SRB council publicity member. We will be approaching members of the Society presenting exciting new findings at the annual meeting 2013 to participate with SRB in promoting their work – and we appreciate your cooperation.

As the Society finances continue to accumulate, Jeremy Thompson has already initiated discussions with our long term consultants to ensure that Council's strategic plans for 2012-2015, aimed at supporting our members, are aligned with strategies to prudently manage our precious financial resources. Our membership secretary Larry Chamley has, in conjunction with the subcommittee, launched the ECR networking grant, to facilitate intergroup interactions to support new research endeavours by our emerging research leaders. Student reps, Jenna Haverfield and Amy Winship have just set up a new student Facebook page for the SRB – which I encourage you to  promptly!

SRB was invited to submit a nomination for a platform presentation to the 2013 International Congress of Andrology and I am delighted to report that our RCRH award winner Brett Nixon has been selected to speak in February in Melbourne on his work on sperm capacitation and fertilisation. This is the first step in promoting the Society to an international audience and I look forward to similar endeavours in the future.

Together Council aided by the SRB Fellows are formulating a Strategic Plan to aid all student, early career researchers and senior members of the Society. We anticipate that we will be able to put in place a number of new initiatives in 2013 designed to maximise the potential of our younger members to become internationally recognised researchers and to facilitate successful project and program grant proposals by our established research leaders.

Council is open and user friendly - and I welcome suggestions and proposals from all members. Please – feel free to contact myself or a student or an ECR council representative directly. The Society is buoyant and well placed and I look forward to ensuring that the next generation of Reproductive Biologists has as much fun doing science as I have!

Eileen

Eileen McLaughlin





Adelaide Convention Centre, 25th - 28th October 2012

The Society for Reproductive Biology is running a one-day symposium on 'Endometriosis' at the 2012 Australian Health and Medical Research Congress.

Although the submission deadline has officially passed, late-breaking poster abstracts are still being accepted for the 6th Australian Health and Medical Research Congress, to be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre November 25th - 28th.

In addition to the excellent program organised for SRB's "Endometriosis" Symposium on Monday Nov 26th, the programs of several other societies include symposia related to Maternal and Fetal Health that will be of interest to SRB members.

The Congress also features Professional Development Workshops for early- and mid-career researchers, a \$1000 "Best of the Best" student poster prize, and scientific forums on three highly contemporary topics: Future Challenges for Australian Health, Indigenous Health, and Ethics and Policy in the Clinical Translation of Stem Cells.

A variety of registration options (1, 2 or 3 days) are available; please visit the SRB website, www.srb.org.au or www.ahmrccongress.org.au for full further information and program details.

For **students and ECRs** there was a AHMRC **registration subsidy** available if you submitted an abstract (and its accepted) to this session. Details are still on the Society's 2012 AHMRC web page. The subsidy effectively closed with the closing of poster abstract submission, but if there are any ECRs that have submitted but not applied for the subsidy, please let Jeremy Thompson know asap.

Email: jeremy.thompson@adelaide.edu.au

We look forward to seeing you in Adelaide!

Treasurer's Report

The Society remains in a very healthy financial position, thanks to the diligence of previous treasurers, including my predecessor, Rick Nicholson, who has made the transition to me quite painless – many thanks Rick for your help and advice. Net assets at 30 June 2012 were \$334,690, compared with \$330,470 at 30 June 2011. Cash at hand was \$263,027 at 30 June 2012. This large amount of cash yields a relatively moderate amount of interest, so Rick engaged a Financial Planning firm, based in Adelaide (GANT Financial Planning), to suggest some conservative, but more productive changes to the Society's investments. This plan was endorsed by the previous Executive and involves moving \$130,000 from the Cash account to other managed funds. This should improve the Society's capital growth by a predicted \$25,000 over a 5 year period compared to the current portfolio.

Just how do we compare with other societies? Reading the latest SSR Newsletter, I was curious to see how their financials and membership numbers stack up against ours. This is a very rough comparison, and clearly the SSR is much larger than SRB. However, our membership is around the 220 mark and assets of \$330,000 or so, giving a value per member of around \$1500. SSR has a capital value of \$2.92M(!), but also a membership of 1700, giving a value of \$1700 per member. So I for one was encouraged that our society is roughly in the same ballpark as our "big sister society".

Jeremy Thompson

SRB Treasurer



Public Relations Report

Media Report

SRB and ESA joined forces at the 2012 annual meeting at the Gold Coast to raise awareness of the benefits of reproductive research to the public. Aided by a local organisation Ruby Public Relations (rubypublicrelations.com.au/), we achieved exceptional coverage. There were 37 media hits; including two TV appearances, eight radio slots, four print and 23 online stories – and altogether the coverage reached an impressive **86 million** people both domestically and internationally.

The two media stories were '*Obesity is bad for your sperm*' and '*Shift work - the unexpected consequences*'. As expected the obesity and male fertility story was of intense interest and generated the majority of media.

In the media game the Holy Grail is to get TV coverage and this was achieved not once but twice by the local Channel 9 Gold Coast and NBN News. What was also gratifying and somewhat unexpected was the coverage our stories overseas via Fox News and Yahoo. Thanks to ASN and Ruby Public Relations for their assistance in increasing awareness of what our researchers do and how it can positively impact the Australian community.

NHMRC reference group meeting at the Shine Dome in Canberra

In September, the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia hosted 140 early and mid career health and medical researchers at an all-day symposium. Our remit was to discuss the 'big' challenges facing early to mid-career researchers – and how this might be improved in the future.

In the first session, five speakers independently provided their opinion on what they perceived were the issues that early and mid-career researchers are facing. Speakers were Professor Simon Foote (clinician-researcher and Dean of the Australian School of Advanced Medicine, and a member of NHMRC Research Committee), Prof Robert Williamson (Australian Academy of Science with a keen interest in science policy), Dr Maggie Evans-Galea (chair of the Early Career Researchers forum and initiative of the Australian Academy of Science) and myself, Dr Sarah Meachem (SRB council member, testis biologist and passionate advocate of the 'health' of the health and medical research workforce and past ASMR President).

There then ensued an open discussion in a Q & A format with 80 early to mid career researchers giving personal accounts of the challenges they and their colleagues face to the speakers and representatives from the NHMRC including Drs Clive Morris (Senior executive, head of Research Group) and Saraid Billiards (Director of People Support).

Concerns and issues were multiple and varied given participants came from a cross section of the sector and its organisations including universities, small to large independent medical research institutes, hospitals and government research facilities. Consensus was reached and five '**big**' issues early to mid-career researchers face were identified, these included; Gender equity and diversity, Relative to opportunity, Mentoring, Appropriateness of NHMRC schemes and Forward planning for career progression.

The reference group was unanimous that quality and quantity of the trained workforce will continue to be eroded unless current policy and practice is reformed. These issues will be taken back to the NHMRC research committee for further consideration. If you would like to be a part of the Postdoc Reference group - email postdoc.referenceGroup@nhmrc.gov.au or call 02 62179134 and request to become a member and have your say.



The McKeon Review

Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research – the McKeon Review

The Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research in Australia was established by the government in late 2011. The Review is to report by the end of 2012 and recommend a 10-year strategic health and medical research plan for the nation. The Panel is chaired by 2011 Australian of the Year, Mr Simon McKeon AO. Visit www.mckeonreview.org.au to view terms of reference. The review received over 300 initial submissions many from key stakeholders including ASMR (see www.asmr.org.au) and SRB collated by our Past President, Mark Hedger. The Consultation Paper is now available on this website for public comment from 3 October until 31 October 2012.

Summarised within the document are 21 recommendations - with the first and key recommendation Drive Research Activity in the Health System by protected investment of 3% of Australian, state and territory government health expenditure (an additional A\$2 to A\$3bn annually by 2023) to drive research activity with the health system as an embedded component. The McKeon Review has been likened to the 1998 commissioned Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research in Australia, chaired by Peter Wills. The Wills Review was extensive and provided the framework for future government policy. SRB encourages your careful consideration and evaluation of this document http://www.mckeonreview.org.au/10857/Consultation_Paper/ and encourages members to comment by 31st October 2012.

Sarah Meachem,
SRB Public Relations Officer



2012 SRB Founders and Presidents Lecturers Professors John Carroll and Keith Jones on the Gold Coast in September



SRB Fellows 2012

Congratulations to the new Fellows of the Society for Reproductive Biology!



SRB Fellows (left to right) Richard Ivell, John Aitken, Grant Montgomery, Kate Loveland, Guiying Nie, Larry Chamley, David Gardner and Russell Jones with SRB past president Mark Hedger (centre).

Congratulations to our new Life Member (and SRB Fellow) Lois Salomonsen!



SRB Life Member Lois Salomonsen pictured with Jane Girling, SRB Secretary on the Gold Coast in September



SRB Awards 2012

2012 SRB RCRH Award winner
A/Prof Brett Nixon
pictured
with Prof Sarah
Robertson from the
Robinson Institute



**PRIORITY RESEARCH CENTRE FOR
REPRODUCTIVE SCIENCE**



2012 Newcastle Award winner
Dr Karla Hutt pictured
With Prof John Aitken
from the University of
Newcastle



2012 SRB New Investigator Award
Winner Yan Ru Gao
pictured
with A/Prof Eva
Dimitriadis





SRB Awards 2012



2012 Oozoa Award winner Genevieve Kerr pictured with Sharon Mortimer from Oozoa

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2012 ANZPRA New Investigator Award winner Dr Kirsten Palmer pictured with ANZPRA President Claire Roberts

2012 Mid Career Poster Award winner Dr Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino pictured with Dr Eva Dimitriadis



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2012 CRG Early Career Poster Award recipient Sze Yee Chai pictured with her supervisor Dr Gemma Madsen





Early Career Researchers

ECR Collaborative Research Travel Award

Applications Close 31st October 2012

Applications for the inaugural ECR Collaborative Research Travel Award close soon and I encourage all ECRs to apply. The award will fund a return flight and up to 2 weeks accommodation (to the value of \$1500) for the purposes of collaboration leading to joint publications/funding or the planning of these activities, or training in a new technique. Further information regarding eligibility and the requirements of the award can be found on the SRB website: www.srb.org.au. Good luck!

Science Meets Parliament

Recently, I had the opportunity to represent the SRB at the annual “Science meets Parliament” in Canberra. This event aims to bring researchers from all fields together with politicians, and to learn about the place of science in society, its role in shaping public policy, and the interaction of science and the media. I was lucky enough to meet with the MP for Adelaide, Kate Ellis (also the Minister for Early Childhood and Childcare, and Employment Participation), to deliver the Society’s message of the importance of reproductive biology within the national research agenda. However, it was clear throughout the event that science is seen by policymakers as just one of a number of competing “rationalities” that need to be balanced in their work. Science is not necessarily weighted to the extent that it perhaps should be in politics (or in the media). It seems to me that at least part of the solution lies in educating laypeople about the importance of science as the best tool we have for understanding and bettering our world. Individually, we can each take on part of this responsibility by striving to be the best communicators of science we can be (something that does not come naturally to all - myself included!), whether it’s an informal discussion of our work with family or friends, or when disseminating findings to a wider audience at public forums or in the media. In this way, we can hope that science’s place in society becomes elevated, and that scientific research is viewed more broadly as making a primary contribution to public policy, and is worthy of continued and increased funding.

Jonathan McGuane

ECR Rep

Don't Forget!

10th International
Congress
of Andrology

**GLOBAL ANDROLOGY
AND MEN'S HEALTH:
Present Challenges
For Future Generations**

23-26 February 2013

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA



Student News

Your new 2012 student representatives are **Jenna Haverfield & Amy Winship**.

On behalf of all the SRB student members, the incoming student representatives would like to thank the outgoing student representatives Shane Sykes and Santosh Sahu for all their hard work and new ideas they brought to the society.



For all SRB student members, a new student Facebook page for the Society of Reproductive Biology has been established. This site will be managed by your student representatives and contains up to date information on awards, travel grants, conference details, upcoming events and employment opportunities.

Please go to the link below to like the page:

www.facebook.com/SocietyOfReproductiveBiology

This page is currently under construction, so if you have any suggestions or feedback on what you would like to see on this page, please feel free to email any suggestions to: srb.students2012@gmail.com.

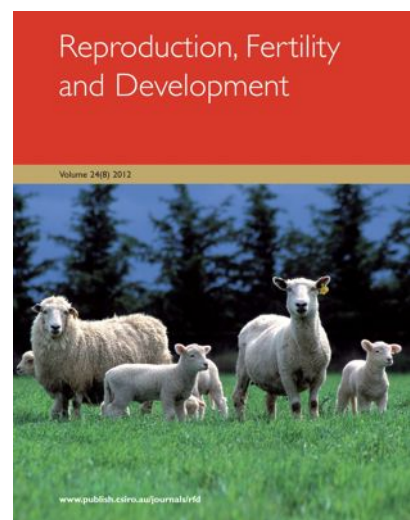
If you don't have a Facebook account, the SRB website is still a good source of information!

Reproduction, Fertility and Development

The online Table of Contents for each issue of **Reproduction, Fertility and Development** includes a clear and concise summary of each paper to help you quickly and easily understand the research.

Members of the Society for Reproductive Biology enjoy free access to **Reproduction, Fertility and Development**, so can read these summaries – and the journal's full archive – online at www.publish.csiro.au/journals/rfd.

The most recent issue of the journal includes a broad range of research conducted on a diverse mix of species – from the use of semen cryopreservation in honey bee breeding programs to the incidence of hyperprolactinaemia in African zoo elephants. Other articles investigate the postpartum endometrial inflammatory response in cattle, the relationship between embryo mortality and nutrition in sheep, the biosynthesis of oestrogen by the early equine embryo, and an ovulation-inducing factor in alpacas.



To read these and other articles, sign up to RSS feeds, or submit your own work to **Reproduction, Fertility and Development** – which offers benefits to authors such as Online Early publication before print, free colour online and in PDFs, no page charges, and Open Access options – visit the journal's website at www.publish.csiro.au/journals/rfd.



SRB Council 2012/13

Elected	
President	Eileen McLaughlin
Secretary	Jane Girling
Treasurer	Jeremy Thompson
Ordinary Members	
POC Co-Chair	Rebecca Robker
Membership Portfolio	Larry Chamley
Public Relations	Sarah Meacham
Awards Committee Chair	Eva Dimitriadis
Newsletter Publisher	Kirsty Pringle
Sponsorship	Jeremy Smith
	Charles Allan
Ad-hoc Committee Members	
Early Career Representatives	Ellen Menkhorst Jonathan McGuane
Student Representatives	Jenna Haverfield Amy Winship
POC Co-Chair	Kaye Stenvers
WCRB	Kate Loveland
Communications Officer/Website	David Sharkey

Want to include something in our next newsletter?

Please email Kirsty Pringle: kirsty.pringle@newcastle.edu.au

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