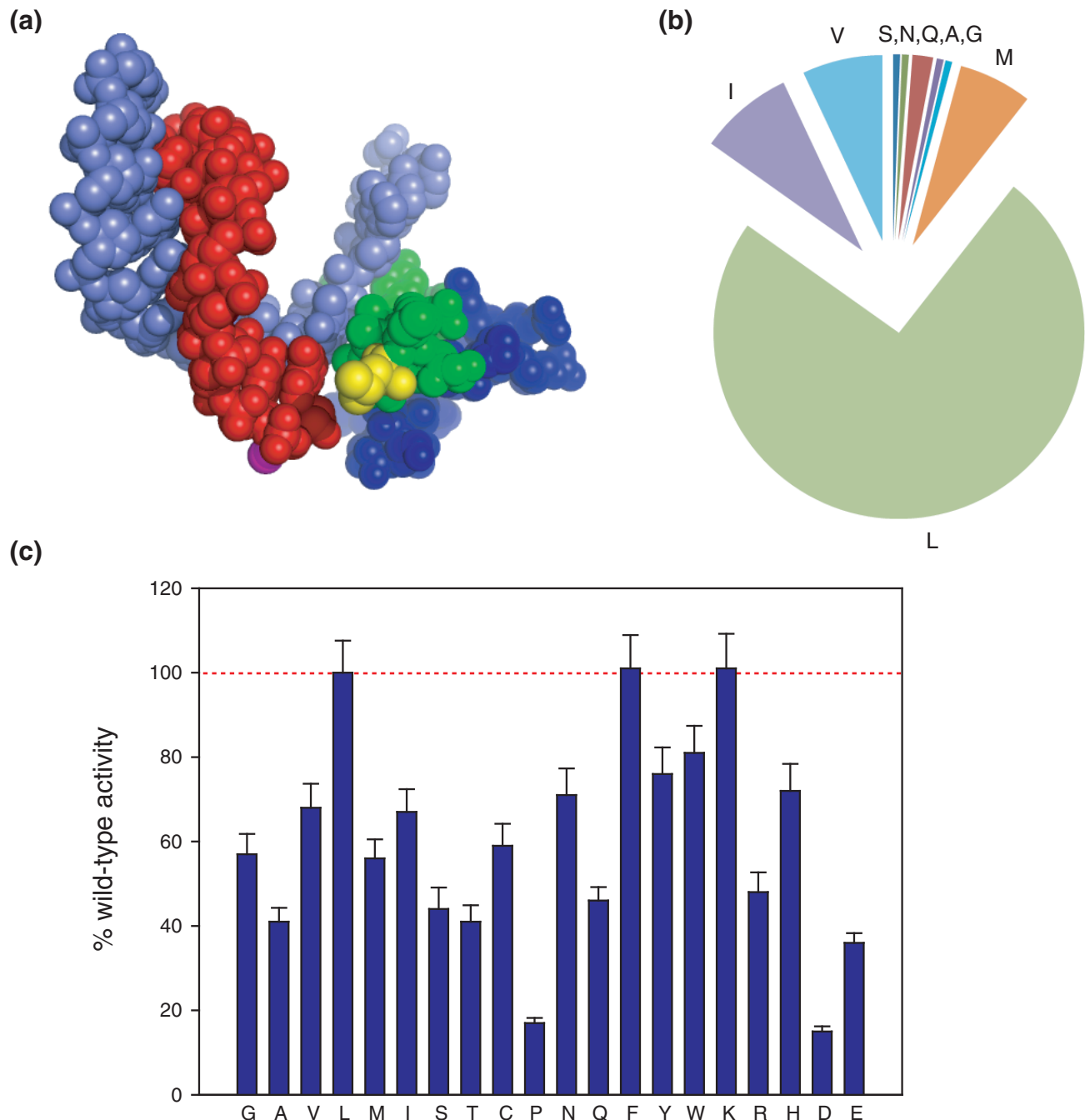




Additional data file 1. Structure, evolution and function of *mjA'* L814

(a) Spatial position of the mutated residue (yellow) relative to the DNA template strand (light blue), nascent transcript (red), bridge helix (green) and the trigger loop base helices (dark blue). The figure is based on the structure of yeast RNAPII (PDB code 1I6H).

(b) Pie chart representing the type and proportion of amino acid residues found in the orthologous position across the evolutionary range. Amino acids are identified by the single letter code. The data are based on an alignment of 171 unique bridge helix sequences (containing archaeal, bacterial and eukaryotic entries) generated with FRPred using the *M. jannaschii* bridge helix sequence as probe [47].

(c) Results of $[\alpha\text{-}^{32}\text{P}]\text{rUTP}$ incorporation into TCA-precipitable counts on nuclease-activated DNA. The specific activities of substitutions with different residues (as identified along the horizontal axis) are shown relative to the activity of the enzyme containing the wild-type bridge helix sequence (defined as 100%; also marked by a horizontal red dotted line). The error bars indicate standard deviation from at least four independent recombinant subunit preparations and *in vitro* assemblies.