

# Australia's Nuclear Choices

Hosted by Engineers Australia – Nuclear Engineering Panel

**Date:** Wednesday, 23rd March 2011  
**Time:** 5.30 pm for 6.00 pm  
**Venue:** Engineers Australia Harricks Auditorium,  
Ground Floor, 8 Thomas St, Chatswood  
**Speaker:** Martine Letts  
Deputy Director of the Lowy Institute for International Policy

## ABSTRACT:

Australia has never been comfortable with anything “nuclear”. Nuclear power for Australia remains a controversial topic. The lowest grade nuclear waste disposal creates community panic. There are varying degrees of comfort about our role as a uranium exporter. The vexed question of uranium exports to India has highlighted the tensions between our strong, and hitherto bipartisan support for the international nonproliferation regime on the one hand, and ambitions to build a strategic relationship with India by supporting India's nuclear energy needs to partially offset its growing carbon footprint on the other. Australia has become accustomed to sitting at the top table with a permanent seat at the IAEA's Board of Governors due to its status as the most advanced nuclear nation in Southeast Asia. But other countries in the region are catching up and may overtake us. Our expertise and diplomatic nuclear fire power are waning. While Australians' views on nuclear power are softening, the position of our political parties ranges from absolute opposition to not really wanting to talk about it. Now that Prime Minister Gillard has announced her government's intention to put a price on carbon, this is not sustainable.

In a world of renewed nuclear proliferation pressures and growing demand for nuclear energy to protect the heating planet, Martine Letts will discuss what choices Australia might make to maintain some influence on the international nuclear agenda. Above all, she wants to explore with the audience how the discourse in Australia might be moved from an argument to a genuine policy discussion on a matter of pressing national importance.

## BIOGRAPHY:



Martine Letts joined the Lowy Institute for International Policy as Deputy Director in January 2005, following 4 years as the Secretary General (CEO) of Australian Red Cross and a 17 year career with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Martine served as Australian Ambassador to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, Deputy Head of Mission and Australian Deputy Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna and was an adviser to Foreign Minister Evans from 1992 to 1994. She specialises in arms control and disarmament.

For further information, contact Don Higson [higsond@bigpond.net.au](mailto:higsond@bigpond.net.au)  
WiN members please rsvp to [winaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:winaustralia@gmail.com) or via our [Facebook](#) page