

MEDIA RELEASE



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THE NATIONAL ENERGY DEBATE COMES TO WHYALLA

Whyalla can hear and question the content of the nuclear and wider national energy debate at a community forum to be held on Thursday 26 April.

Two of the debate's prominent participants are being brought to Whyalla by the Australian Technology Network of Universities (which includes the University of South Australia) so that the city can understand more, assess the facts, and make its own judgements.

"The debate so far has been almost totally confined to the States' capital cities, yet, for example, a nuclear power plant would more likely find a home in or near a major regional city than a metropolitan city," said Vicki Thomson, Director of the ATN. "Hence Whyalla is where the opportunity to hear from two of those at the heart of the energy debate should be offered, and that is why we are bringing Martin Thomas and Professor Stuart White to Whyalla."

Martin Thomas was a member of the Federal Government's 2006 Uranium Mining, Processing and Nuclear Energy Review (UMPNER) which reported that Australia had a nuclear future. He has extensive experience in the energy and commercial sectors and is currently Chairman of Dulhunty Power Ltd.

"Martin Thomas will draw out the key findings of the Review and present them in a layman friendly manner. It will specifically address the issues of cost, sustainability, the alternatives, safety and of course spent fuel disposal."

Professor Stuart White is the Director of the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney. He has worked and researched sustainability for more than 20 years.

"Water scarcity and climate change have dominated the news in 2006. The link between these two is well known in terms of the anticipated impact of climate change on water supply availability, and there is an increasing awareness of the energy intensity of water supply, which continues to rise as levels of treatment increase and as lower cost, lower energy sources are no longer available," Ms Thomson said.

"This presentation will grapple with the linkage between these two important infrastructures that keep our cities and regional centres running. What are the options? What would a sustainable water and energy future look like and what would it take to move in that direction?"

The Australian Technology Network comprises five of Australia's largest universities of which the University of South Australia with its Whyalla campus is one. (The others are Curtin University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Technology, Sydney, and RMIT University in Melbourne).

Ms Thomson said the ATN had significant involvement in the current energy debate and had submitted a comprehensive submission to last year's UMPNER.

"Universities should always be at the forefront of nation-changing debate and decision making, and we have been very determined to ensure that those interested in hearing more and joining the debate are not disenfranchised because they don't live on the east coast," she said.

**The forum will be hosted by UniSA and will be held at Room MB1 - 36/37, University of South Australia, 111 Nicolson Avenue, Whyalla Norrie from 5.30 pm to 7.30pm. There is no charge to attend and the audience will have the opportunity to question the two speakers after each presentation. Light refreshments will be served.*

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