

## Junior A, Grand Final

**TOPIC:** That Australia should adopt nuclear energy.

### 1. Type of Topic

This is a normative debate. This means that the affirmative should propose a 'model' (a policy on how this idea would be implemented). This model should be clearly described to outline what changes the affirmative team will make to the status quo, and how these changes will be enacted. In this instance, the Affirmative side of the house supports Australia adopting nuclear energy.

The negative team can either support the status quo or propose a counter-model. This counter-model must be different from the status quo, but also different from the model the affirmative team is suggesting. The negative team should ensure they clearly identify whether they are supporting the status quo or proposing a counter-model.

### 2. Background / Context

The debate over whether Australia should adopt nuclear energy has evolved over several decades, shaped by concerns about energy security, climate change, and the country's abundant natural resources. Australia possesses significant uranium reserves, making it one of the world's largest suppliers of this key nuclear fuel.

In the early 2000s, discussions intensified as the Australian government began to consider nuclear power as a potential solution to rising energy demands and greenhouse gas emissions. The 2006 report by the Uranium Mining, Processing and Nuclear Energy Review Committee, known as the "Switkowski Report," recommended the development of a nuclear industry in Australia, further fuelling the debate.

Proponents argue that nuclear energy could provide a reliable and low-carbon energy source, helping Australia transition away from fossil fuels and meet its climate targets. They highlight the need for energy security, particularly given the growing reliance on intermittent renewable sources like wind and solar.

Conversely, opponents raise significant concerns about the safety of nuclear power, especially in light of historical accidents such as Chernobyl and Fukushima. They also point to unresolved issues regarding nuclear waste management and the potential risks associated with nuclear proliferation.

Public opinion on nuclear energy remains divided, with some advocating for its adoption as part of a diversified energy strategy, while others firmly oppose it.

The debate continues to be a contentious issue in Australian politics, reflecting broader concerns about energy policy and environmental sustainability.

### **3. Questions for Consideration**

- What are the potential benefits of nuclear energy in addressing Australia's energy security and climate goals?
- How does nuclear energy compare to renewable sources in terms of cost, reliability, and environmental impact?
- What are the safety measures in place to prevent nuclear accidents, and how effective have they been in other countries?
- How should Australia manage nuclear waste, and what are the best practices observed globally?
- What are the public perceptions and concerns surrounding nuclear energy, and how can they be addressed?
- What role should government policy play in supporting or regulating the nuclear energy sector?
- How can Australia balance its nuclear ambitions with its commitments to renewable energy and reducing carbon emissions?
- What are the implications of nuclear energy on local communities, especially those near potential sites for nuclear facilities?
- How does the experience of other countries with nuclear energy inform Australia's potential approach?
- What are the economic impacts of adopting nuclear energy, including job creation and investment opportunities?

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