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Media Release

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# Martine Letts to lead Asialink as new CEO

The University of Melbourne and Asialink – Australia’s leading centre for creative engagement in Asia — have appointed a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Martine Letts.

Established in 1990 as a joint initiative of the Australian Government's Commission for the Future and the Myer Foundation, Asialink is hosted by the University of Melbourne.

Ms Letts comes to Asialink following a successful six-year tenure as Chief Executive Officer of Committee for Melbourne. She created the Melbourne 4.0 program, challenging the city to be competitive in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and has led the Committee’s COVID-19 Road to Recovery Program.

Ms Letts has significant experience in government and international policy sectors and has worked throughout her career to apply her high-level expertise to promote Australia internationally. Prior to her role with the Committee for Melbourne, Ms Letts served as CEO of the Australia China Business Council; led the Lowy Institute for International Policy’s organisational development as Deputy Director and transformed the Australian Red Cross’ delivery of relief services, serving as Secretary-General from 2001-2004.

University of Melbourne Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) Professor Michael Wesley welcomed Ms Letts’ appointment and said Australia's relationships in Asia and the Pacific are critical to the University, with significant opportunity for collaboration and cooperation.

"Asialink plays a critical role in connecting arts, business, diplomacy and education, areas that are also core to the mission of the University of Melbourne. And, as part of a culturally diverse society, it has never been more important for us to engage effectively and collaboratively with partners across the region,” Professor Wesley said.

“Ms Letts’ appointment is warmly welcomed. I'm confident that she will continue to build on the strong work of Asialink, deepening a collective Asian-Australian understanding and engagement."

Ms Letts brings significant diplomatic experience to her position at Asialink, having served as a senior diplomat from 1983-2000. During this period, she was appointed Australian Ambassador to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay; Deputy Head of Mission; and Australian Deputy Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. Ms Letts served as an adviser to former Australian Foreign Minister the Hon. Professor Gareth Evans AC QC from 1992 to 1994.

She said she is thrilled to work closely with Australia’s partners in the region, sharing insights, building capabilities, and fostering the connections needed to enhance shared growth for Australia with Asia. “As a proud, Melbourne-based national institution Asialink has a key role to play in Melbourne’s success and profile as a leading global city in the Indo-Pacific Region,” Ms Letts said. This is where our future security and prosperity lies.”

Asialink’s Chairman, Peter Varghese AO said that he is “looking forward to working with Ms Letts given her breadth of international experience and leadership expertise across government, business and the not-for-profit sectors.”

Ms Letts starts her new role in March 2022.

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